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THE LIFE

OF

CARDINAL MEZZOFANTI,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

EMINENT LINGUISTS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

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PREFACE.

The following Memoir had its origin in an article on Cardinal Mezzofanti, contributed to the Edinburgh Review in the year 1855. The subject appeared at that time to excite considerable interest. The article was translated into French, and, in an abridged form, into Italian; and I received through the editor, from persons entirely unknown to me, more than one suggestion that I should complete the biography, accompanied by offers of additional information for the purpose.

Nevertheless, the notices of the Cardinal on which that article was founded, and which at that time comprised all the existing materials for a biography, appeared to me, with all their interest, to want the precision and the completeness which are essential to a just estimate of his attainments. I felt that to judge satisfactorily his acquaintance with a range of languages so vast as that which fame ascribed to him, neither sweeping statements founded on popular reports, however confident, nor general assertions from individuals, however distinguished and trustworthy, could safely be regarded as sufficient. The proof of his familiarity with any particular language, in order to be satisfactory, ought to be specific, and ought to rest on the testimony

either of a native, or at least of one whose skill in the language was beyond suspicion.

At the same time the interest with which the subject seemed to be generally regarded, led me to hope that, by collecting, while they were yet recent, the reminiscences of persons of various countries and tongues, who had known and spoken with the Cardinal, it might be possible to lay the foundation of a much more exact judgment regarding him than had hitherto been attainable.

A short inquiry satisfied me that, although scattered over every part of the globe, there were still to be found living representatives of most of the languages ascribed to the Cardinal, who would be able, from their own personal knowledge, to declare whether, and in what degree, he was acquainted with each; and I resolved to try whether it might not be possible to collect their opinions.

The experiment has involved an extensive and tedious correspondence; many of the persons whom I have had to consult being ex-pupils of the Propaganda, residing in very distant countries; more than one beyond the range of regular postal communication, and only accessible by a chance message transmitted through a consul, or through the friendly offices of a brother missionary.

For the spirit in which my inquiries have been met, I am deeply grateful. I have recorded in the course of the narrative the names of many to whom I am indebted for valuable assistance and information. Other valued friends whom I have not named, will kindly accept this general acknowledgment.

There is one, however, to whom I owe a most special and grateful expression of thanks—his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. From him, at the very outset of my task, I received a mass of anecdotes, recollections, and suggestions, which, besides their great intrinsic interest, most materially assisted me in my further inquiries; and the grace of the contribution was enhanced by the fact, that it was generously withdrawn from that delightful store of Personal Recollections which his Eminence has since given to the public; and in which his brilliant pen would have made it one of the most attractive episodes.

Several of the autographs, also, which appear in the sheet of fac-similes, I owe to his Eminence. Others I have received from friends who are named in the Memoir.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page	35,	Line 5, for "yards" read "feet."'
	52,	last, after "(1704)," supply "who."
	57,	21, for "Bourmouf," read "Bournouf."
	59,	8, for "John and," read "and John."
	76,	2nd last, for "Boehthingk," read "Boehtlingk."
	117,	4th last, (and three other places,) for "marvelous," read "marvellous."
	119,	2nd last, for "months," read "years."
	121,	2nd last, for "Hall," read "Hill."
	281,	22, for "Grüner," read "Grüder."
	283,	17, for "Rabinical," read "Rabbinical."
	312,	10, for "unable," read "able."
	426,	4th last, for "seneeta," read "senecta;" also interchange ; and !

MEMOIRS

OF

EMINENT LINGUISTS.

In the Life of Cardinal Mezzofanti I have attempted to ascertain, by direct evidence, the exact number of languages with which that great linguist was acquainted, and the degree of his familiarity with each.

Eminence in any pursuit, however, is necessarily relative. We are easily deceived about a man's stature until we have seen him by the side of other men; nor shall we be able to form a just notion of the linguistic accomplishments of Cardinal Mezzofanti, or at least to bring them before our minds as a practical reality, until we shall have first considered what had been effected before him by other men who attained to distinction in the same department.

I have thought it desirable, therefore, to prefix to his Life a summary history of the most eminent linguists of ancient and modern times. There is no branch of scholarship which has left fewer traces in literature, or has received a more scanty measure of justice from history. Viewed in the light of a curious but unpractical pursuit, skill in languages is admired for a time, perhaps indeed enjoys an exaggerated popularity; but it passes away like a nine days' wonder, and seldom finds an exact or permanent record. Hence, while the literature of every country abounds with memoirs of distinguished poets, philosophers, and historians, few, even among professed antiquarians, have directed their attention to the history of eminent linguists, whether in ancient or in modern times. In all the ordinary repositories of curious learning—Pliny, Aulus Gellius, and Athenæus, among the ancients; Bayle, Gibbon, Feyjoo, Disraeli, and Vulpius, among the moderns—this interesting chapter is entirely overlooked; nor does it appear to have engaged the attention even of linguists or philologers themselves.

The following Memoir, therefore, must claim the indulgence due to a first essay in a new and difficult subject. No one can be more sensible than the writer of its many imperfections; —of the probable omission of names which should have been recorded;—of the undue prominence of others with inferior pretensions; and perhaps of still more serious inaccuracies of a different kind. It is only offered in the absence of something better and more complete; and with the hope of directing to what is certainly a curious and interesting subject, the attention of others who enjoy more leisure and opportunity for its investigation.

The diversity of languages which prevails among the various branches of the human family, has proved, almost equally with their local dispersion, a barrier to that free intercommunion which is one of the main instruments of civilization. "The confusion of tongues, the first great judgment of God upon the ambition of man," says Bacon, in the Introductory Book of his "Advancement of Learning," "hath chiefly imbarred the open trade and intercourse of learning and knowledge."* Perhaps it would be more correct to say that these two great impediments to intercourse have mutually assisted each other. The divergency of languages seems to keep pace with the dispersion of the population. Adelung lays it down as the result of the most careful philological investigations, that where the difficulties of intercourse are such as existed among the ancients and as still prevail among the less civilized populations, no language can maintain itself unchanged over a space of more than one hundred and fifty thousand square miles.†

It might naturally be expected, therefore, that one of the earliest efforts of the human intellect would have been directed towards the removal of this barrier, and that one of the first sciences to invite the attention of men would have been the knowledge of languages. Few sciences, nevertheless, were more neglected by the ancients.

It is true that the early literatures of many of the ancient nations contain legends on this head which might almost throw into the shade the greatest marvels related of Mezzofanti. In one of the Chinese stories regarding the youth of Buddha,

* Works I., p. 42.
† Mithridates, Vol. II. Einleitung, p. 7.

translated by Klaproth, it is related that, when he was ten years old, he asked his preceptor, Babourenou, to teach him all the languages of the earth, seeing that he was to be an apostle to all men; and that when Babourenou confessed his ignorance of all except the Indian dialects, the child himself taught his master "fifty foreign tongues with their respective characters."* A still more marvellous tale is told by one of the Rabbinical historians, Rabbi Eliezer, who relates that Mordechai, (one of the great heroes of Talmudic legend), was acquainted with seventy languages; and that it was by means of this gift he understood the conversation of the two eunuchs who were plotting in a foreign tongue the death of the king.† Nor is the Koran without its corresponding prodigy. When the Prophet was carried up to Heaven, before the throne of the Most High, "God promised that he should have the knowledge of all languages."‡

But when we turn to the genuine records of antiquity, we find no ground for the belief that such legends as these have even that ordinary substructure of truth which commonly underlies the fables of mythology. Neither the Sacred Narratives, nor those of the early profane authors, contain a single example of remarkable proficiency in languages.

It is true that in the later days of the Jewish people, interpreters were appointed in the synagogues to explain the lessons read from the Hebrew Scriptures for the benefit of their foreign brethren; that in all the courts of the Eastern monarchs interpreters were found, through whom they communicated with foreign envoys, or with the motley tribes of their own empire; and that professional interpreters were at the service of foreigners in the great centres of commerce or travel,§ who, it may be presumed, were masters of

* See the whole legend in Huc's Chinese Empire, II., p. 187-8.

† Auswahl Historischer Stücke aus Hebräischen Schriftstellern, von den zweiten Jahrhundert bis auf die Gegenwart. Berlin, 1840. p. 10. The book is entitled *Pirki Rabbi Eliezer*, "The chapters of Rabbi Eliezer." Its date is extremely uncertain. See Moreri Dict. Hist. VII., 361.

‡ See Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 66.

§ According to the account of Pliny, Dioscurias, a city of Colchis (the present Iskuriah,) was frequented for commercial purposes by no less than *three hundred different races*; and he adds that a hundred and thirty interpreters were employed there under the Romans (*Hist. Nat.* VI., 5. Miller's Ed. II., 176.) The Arabian writers, Ibn Haukal and Musadi, mention seventy-two languages which were spoken at Derbent. Strabo speaks of twenty-six in the Eastern Caucasus alone. See *The Tribes of the Caucasus*, p. 14, also p. 32.

several languages. The philosophers, too, who traversed remote countries in pursuit of wisdom, can hardly be supposed to have returned without some acquaintance with the languages of the nations among whom they had voyaged. Solon and Pythagoras are known to have visited Egypt and the East; the latter also sojourned for a considerable time in Italy and the islands; the wanderings of Plato are said to have been even more extensive. Nay, in some instances these pilgrims of knowledge extended their researches beyond the limits of their own ethnographical region. Thus, on the one hand, the Scythian sages, Anacharsis and Zamolxis, themselves most probably of the Mongol or Tartar tongue, sojourned for a long time in countries where the Indo-European family of languages alone prevailed; on the other, the merchants of Tyre were in familiar and habitual intercourse with the Italo-Pelasgic race; and the Phœnician explorers, in their well-known circumnavigation of Africa described by Herodotus, must have come in contact with still more numerous varieties both of race and of tongue. Nevertheless it may fairly be doubted whether these or similar opportunities among the ancients, resulted in any very remarkable attainments in the department of languages. The absence of all record furnishes a strong presumption to the contrary; and there is one example, that of Herodotus, which would almost be in itself conclusive. This acute and industrious explorer devoted many years to foreign travel. He visited every city of note in Greece and Asia Minor, and every site of the great battles between the Greeks and Barbarians. He explored the whole line of the route of Xerxes in his disastrous expedition. He visited in succession all the chief islands of the Egean, as well as those of the western coast of Greece. His landward wanderings extended far into the interior. He reached Babylon, Ecbatana, and Susa, and spent some time among the Scythian tribes on the shores of the Black Sea. He resided long in Egypt, from which he passed southwards as far as Elephantine, eastwards into Arabia, and westwards through Lybia, at least as far as Cyrene. And yet Dahlmann is of opinion that, with all his industry, and all the spirit of inquiry which was his great characteristic, Herodotus never became acquainted even with the language of Egypt, but contented himself with the service of an interpreter.*

* Dahlmann, p. 47. It would be presumptuous to differ from so ingenious a writer, and so profound a master of the subject which he treats; but I may observe that there are some passages of Herodotus

In like manner, it would be difficult to shew, either from the Cyropædia, or the Expedition of Cyrus, that Xenophon, during his foreign travel, became master of Persian or any kindred Eastern tongue. Nor am I aware that there has ever been discovered in the writings of Plato any evidence of familiarity with the language of those Eastern philosophers from whose science he is believed to have drawn so largely.

It is strange that the two notable exceptions to this barrenness of eminent linguists which characterizes the classic times, Mithridates and Cleopatra, should both have been of royal rank. The former, the celebrated king of Pontus, long one of the most formidable enemies of the Roman name, is alleged to have spoken fluently the languages of all the subjects of his empire; an empire so vast, and comprising so many different nationalities as to throw an air of improbability over the story. According to Aulus Gellius,* he "was thoroughly conversant" *(percalluit)* with the languages of all the nations *(twenty-five in number)* over which his rule extended.† The other writers who relate the circumstance—Valerius Maximus,‡ Pliny,§ and Solinus—make the number only twenty-two. Some commentators have regarded the story as a gross exaggeration; and others have sought to diminish its marvellousness by explaining it of different dialects, rather than of distinct languages. But there does not appear in the narrative of the original writers any reason whether for the doubt or for the restriction. Pliny declares that "it is quite certain;" and the matter-of-fact tone in which they all relate it, makes it clear that they wished to be understood literally. It was the king's invariable practice, they tell us, to communicate with all the subjects of his polyglot empire directly and in person, and "never through an interpreter;" and Gellius roundly affirms that he was able to

which seem to imply a certain degree at least of acquaintance with Egyptian (for instance II. 79, II. 99), and with the ancient language of Persia, as IX. 100, &c. It must be admitted, however, that a very superficial knowledge of either language would suffice to explain these allusions.

* XVII. 17.

† This is not Mithridates's only title to distinction. Perhaps it may not be so generally known that he was equally celebrated for his powers of eating and drinking! Athenæus tells of him that he once offered a prize of a talent to the greatest eater in his dominions. After a full competition the prize was awarded to Mithridates *himself.—Athenæus, Deipnosoph, Book X., p.* 415.

‡ VIII. 7.

§ Hist. Nat. VII. 24, and again XXV. 2.

converse in each and every one of these tongues "with as much correctness as if it were his native dialect."

The attainments of Cleopatra, although far short of what is reported of Mithridates, are nevertheless described by Plutarch* as very extraordinary. He says that she "spoke most languages, and that there were but few of the foreign ambassadors to whom she gave audience through an interpreter." The languages which he specifies are those of the Ethiopians, of the Troglodytes (probably a dialect of Coptic), of the Hebrews, of the Arabs, the Syrians, the Medes, and the Persians; but he adds that this list does not comprise all the languages which this extraordinary woman understood.

Now the very prominence assigned to these examples, and the absence of all allusion to any other which might be supposed to approximate to them, may afford a presumption that they are almost solitary. Valerius Maximus, in his well-known chapter *De Studio et Industria,* cites the case of Mithridates as a very remarkable example "of study and industry." It is highly probable therefore, that, if he knew any other eminent linguists, he would have added their names. Yet the only cases which he instances are those of Cato learning Greek in his old age, of Themistocles acquiring Persian during his exile, and of Publius mastering all the five dialects of Greece during the time of his Prætorship. In like manner, Aulus Gellius has no more notable linguist to produce, in contrast with Mithridates, than the old poet Ennius, who used to boast that he had three hearts,† because he could speak Greek, Latin, and his rude native dialect, Oscan. And Pliny, with all his love of parallels, is even more meagre:—he does not recite a single name in comparison with that of Mithridates.

The Romans, especially under the early Republic, appear to have been singularly indifferent or unsuccessful in cultivating languages; and the bad Greek of the Roman ambassadors to Tarentum, for their ridicule of which the Tarentines paid so dearly, is almost an average specimen of the accomplishments of the earlier Romans as linguists. Nor can this circumstance fail to appear strange, when it is remembered over how many different races and tongues the wide domain of Rome extended. The very multiplicity of languages submitted to her government

* Life of Anthony. Langhorne's Plutarch, v. p. 182.

† It was probably by some such fanciful analogy that Cecrops obtained the name διφυης, because he knew both Greek and Egyptian.

would seem to have imposed upon her public men the necessity of familiarizing themselves, even for the discharge of their public office, with at least the principal ones among them. But, on the contrary, for a long time they steadily pursued the policy of imposing, as far as practicable, upon the conquered nationalities the Latin language, at least in public and official transactions.*

And, so far as regards the Eastern and Northern languages, this exclusion was successfully and permanently enforced at Rome. The slave population of the city comprised almost every variety of race within the limits of the Empire. The very names of the slaves who are introduced in the plays of Plautus and Terence—Syra, Phœnicium, Afer, Geta, Dorias, &c. (which are but their respective gentile appellatives)—embrace a very large circle of the languages of Asia, Africa, and Northern Europe. And yet, with the exception of a single scene in the Pœnulus of Plautus, in which the well-known Punic speech of Hanno the Carthaginian is introduced,† there is nothing in either of these dramatists from which we could infer that any of the manifold languages of the slave population of Rome effected an entrance among their haughty masters. They were all as completely ignored by the Romans, as is the vernacular Celtic of the Irish agricultural servant in the midland counties of England.

But it was not so for Greek. From the Augustan age onwards, this polished language began to dispute the mastery with Latin, even in Rome itself.

> "Graecia capta ferum cepit captorem, et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio—"

applies to the language, even more than to the arts. In the days of the Rhetorician, Molon, (Cicero's master in eloquence,) Greek had obtained the entrée of the Senate. In the time of Tiberius, its use was permitted even in forensic pleadings. With the emperors who succeeded,‡ the triumph of Greek was still more complete. From Pliny downwards, there is hardly an author of eminence in the Roman Empire who did

* See a long list of examples cited by Bayle, Dict. Histor. I. 943. The legislation on the subject, however, was not uniform; nor is it easy to reconcile some parts of it with each other, or to understand any general principles on which they can be founded.

† Pœnulus, act v., sc. 1.

‡ With the exception of Tacitus, who claimed to be of the family of the great historian, and made a vigorous but unsuccessful effort for the revival of declining Latinity.

not write in that language;—Pausanias, Dion, Galen, even the Emperor Marcus Aurelius himself, with all the traditionary Roman associations of his name.

It was so also with the Christian population and the Christian literature of Rome. Almost all the Christian writings of the first two centuries are in Greek. The early Roman liturgy was Greek. The population of Rome was in great part a Greek-speaking race. A large proportion of the inscriptions in the Roman Catacombs are Greek, and some even of the Latin ones are engraved in Greek characters. Nay, the early Christian churches in Gaul, Vienne, Lyons, and Marseilles, and the few remains of their literature which have reached us, are equally Greek.*

In a word, during the first two centuries of the Christian era, making due allowance for the difference of the periods, Greek and Latin held towards each other in Rome the same relation which we find between Norman-French and Saxon in England after the Conquest; and we may safely say that, during those centuries, a knowledge of both languages was the ordinary accomplishment of all educated men, and was shared by many of the lowest of the population.

Beyond this limit, however, we read of no remarkable linguists even among the accomplished scholars of the Augustan age. No one will doubt that the two Varros may fairly be taken as, in this respect, the most favourable specimens of the class. Now neither of them seems to have gone further than a knowledge of Greek. Out of the four hundred and ninety books which Marcus Terentius Varro wrote, there is not one named which would indicate familiarity with any other foreign language.

The Neo-Platonists of the second and third centuries, whose researches in Oriental Philosophy must have brought them into contact with some of the Eastern languages, may possibly form an exception to this general statement; but, on the whole, in the absence of positive and exact information on the subject, it may not unreasonably be conjectured that, among the Christian scholars of the second, third, and fourth centuries, we might find a wider range of linguistic attainments than among their gentile contemporaries. The critical study of the Bible itself involved the necessity of familiarity, not only with Greek and Hebrew, but with more than one cognate oriental dialect besides. St. Jerome, besides the classic languages and

* See Milman's Latin Christianity, I., 28-9.

his native Illyrian, is known to have been familiar with several of the Eastern tongues; and it is not improbable that some of the earlier commentators and expositors of the Bible may be taken as equally favourable specimens of the Christian linguists.* Origen's Hexapla is a monument of his scholarship in Hebrew, and probably in Syriac and Samaritan. St. Clement of Alexandria was perhaps even a more accomplished linguist; for he tells that of the masters under whom he studied, one was from Greece, one from Magna Græcia, a third from Cœle-Syria, a fourth from Egypt, a fifth an Assyrian, and a sixth a Hebrew.† And St. Gregory Nazianzen expressly relates of his friend St. Basil, that, even before he came to Athens to commence his rhetorical studies, he was already well-versed in many languages.‡

From the death of Constantine, however, the study began rapidly to decline, even among ecclesiastics. The disruption of the Empire naturally tended to diminish the intercourse between East and West, and by consequence the interchange of their languages. It would appear, too, as if the barbarian conquerors adopted, in favour of their own languages, the same policy which the Romans had pursued for Latin. Attila is said to have passed a law prohibiting the use of the Latin language in his newly conquered kingdom,§ and to have taken pains, by importing native teachers, to procure the substitution of Gothic in its stead. At all events, in whatever way the change was brought about, a knowledge of both Greek and Latin, which in the classic times of the Empire had been the ordinary accomplishment of every educated man, became uncommon and almost exceptional. Pope Gregory the Great, who, bitterly as he has been assailed as an

* In some congregations, as early as the first and second century, there were official interpreters [Ἑρμηνεῖται], whose duty it was to translate into the provincial tongues what had been read in the church. They resembled the interpreters of the Jewish synagogue. See Neander's Kirchen-Geschichte, I. 530.

† Stromata, I. 276 (Paris, 1641.)

‡ Opp. I. 326 (Paris, 1609.) Hom. in Laudem St. Basilii.

§ See Bayle, Dict. Historique, I. 408. It is curious that the victorious Mussulmen at Jerusalem enacted the very opposite. No Christian was permitted to speak the sacred language of the Koran. See Milman's "Latin Christianity," II. 42, and again III. 225. It would be interesting to examine the history of enactments of this kind, and their effects upon the languages which they were intended to suppress,—the Norman efforts against English, those of the English against Celtic, Joseph II's against Magyar, and others of the same kind.

enemy of letters, must be confessed to have been the most eminent Western scholar of his day, spoke Greek very imperfectly; he complains that it was difficult, even at Constantinople, to find any one who could translate Greek satisfactorily into Latin;* and a still earlier instance is recorded, in which a pope, in other respects a man of undoubted ability, was unable to translate the letter of the Greek patriarch, much less to communicate with the Greek ambassadors, except through an interpreter.†

More than one, indeed, of the early theological controversies was embittered through the misunderstandings caused between the East and West by mutual ignorance of each other's language. Pelagius succeeded in obtaining a favourable decision from the Council of Jerusalem in 415, chiefly because, while his Western adversary, Orosius, was unable to speak Greek, the fathers of the Council were ignorant of Latin. The protracted controversy on the Three Chapters owed much of its inveteracy to the ignorance of the Westerns‡ of the original language of the works whose orthodoxy was impugned; and it is well known that the condemnation of the decree of the sixth council on the use of sacred images issued by the fathers of Francfort, was based exclusively on a strangely erroneous Latin translation of the acts of the council, through which translation alone they were known in Germany and Gaul.§

The foundation of the Empire of Charlemagne consummated the separation between the Greek and Latin races and their languages. The venerated names of Bede and of Alcuin in the Western Church, and the more questionable celebrity of the Patriarch Photius in the Eastern, constitute a passing exception. But it need hardly be added that they stand almost

* Ep. VI. 27.

† When the Patriarch Nestorius wrote to Pope Celestine his account of the controversy now known under his name, the latter was obliged, before he could reply, to wait till Nestorius's letter had been translated into Latin Erat enim in Latinum sermo vertendus. This letter, together with those of Cyril of Alexandria, form part of an interesting correspondence which illustrates very strikingly the pre-eminence then enjoyed in the Church by the Roman bishop, and is found in Hardouin's Concilia, I. 1302. See also Walch's Historie der Ketzereien, V. 701.

‡ Even Pope Vigilius himself professes his want of familiarity with the Greek language. See his celebrated *Constitutum* in Hardouin's Coll. Concil III. col. 39.

§ See the original in Labbe's *Concilia*, VIII. 835. Both the original and the translation will be found in Leibnitz's "System of Theology," p. 52, note.

entirely alone; and it will readily be believed that, amid the Barbarian irruptions from without, and the fierce intestine revolutions, of which Europe was the theatre during the rest of the earlier mediæval period, even that familiarity with the Greek and oriental languages which we have described, entirely disappeared in the West.

The wars of the Crusades, and the reviving intellectual activity in which this and other great events of the second mediæval period originated, gave a new impulse to the study of languages. Frederic II., a remarkable example of the union of great intellectual gifts with deep moral perversity, spoke fluently six languages, Latin, Greek, Italian, German, Hebrew, and even Arabic.* The Moorish schools in Spain began to be visited by Christian students. In this manner Arabic found its way into the West; and the intermixture of learned Jews in the European kingdoms afforded similar opportunities for the cultivation of Hebrew, which were turned to account by many, especially among biblical scholars. On the other hand, notwithstanding the contempt for profane learning which breathes through the Koran, the Saracen scholars began to direct their attention to the learning of other creeds, and the languages of other races. Ibn Wasil, who came into Italy in 1250 as ambassador to Manfred, the son of Frederic II., was reported to be familiar with the Western tongues. The Spanish Moors, too, began sedulously to cultivate Greek. The works of Aristotle, of Galen, of Dioscorides, and many other Greek writers, chiefly philosophical, were translated into Arabic by Averroes, Ibn Djoldjol and Avicenna. And the Jewish scholars of that age were equally assiduous in the cultivation of Greek. The learned Rabbi Maimonides, born in Cordova in the early part of the 12th century, was not only master of many Eastern tongues, but was also thoroughly familiar with the Greek language.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that it was among the Moors or the Hebrews that the revival of the study of languages first commenced. Alcuin, in addition to the modern languages with which his sojourn in various kingdoms must have made him acquainted, was also familiar with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Hermann, the Dalmatian, the first translator of the Koran, was well acquainted with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. The celebrated Raymond Lully, who was a native of Majorca, was able to lecture in Latin

* See Milman's Latin Christianity, IV. p. 58, and again 367.

Greek, Arabic, and perhaps Hebrew;—an accomplishment especially wonderful in one who was among the most laborious and prolific writers of his age, and who left after him, according to some authorities, (though this, no doubt, is a great exaggeration), not less than a thousand* works on the most diversified subjects. At the instance of this eminent orientalist, the council of Vienne directed that professorships should be founded in all the great Universities, for the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic languages.†

An example of, for the period, very remarkable proficiency in modern languages is recorded in the history of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215. Roderigo Ximenes,‡ Archbishop of Toledo in the early part of the thirteenth century, a native of Navarre, but a scholar of the University of Paris, was one of the representatives of the Spanish Church at that Council. A controversy regarding the Primacy of Spain had arisen between the Sees of Toledo and Compostella, which was referred for adjudication to the bishops there assembled. Ximenes addressed to the council a long Latin oration in defence of the claim of Toledo; and, as many of his auditory, which consisted both of the clergy and the laity, were ignorant of that language, he repeated the same argument in a series of discourses addressed to the natives of each country in succession; to the Romans, Germans, French, English, Navarrese, and Spaniards,§ each in their respective tongues. Thus the number of languages in which he spoke was at least seven, and it is highly probable that he had others at his disposal, if his auditory had been of such a nature as to render them necessary.

The taste for the languages and literature of the East received a further stimulus from the foundation of the Christian principalities at Antioch and Jerusalem, from the establishment of the Latin Empire at Constantinople, and in general from the long wars in the East, to which the enthusiasm of the age attracted the most enterprising spirits of European

* The titles of nearly two hundred of his works are still preserved.

† Rohrbacher Hist.de l'Eglise, XIX., 569.

‡ He is the author of a History of Spain, in nine books; and besides his very remarkable attainments as a linguist, was reputed among the most learned scholars of his age.

§ See the account in Labbe, Collect. Concil. VII. 79. The writer observes; Cum ab apostolorum tempore auditum non sit nec scriptum reperiatur, quemque ad populum eandem concionem habuisse tot ac tam diversis linguis cuncta exponendo. The fact is also related by Feyjoo. Teatro critico, IV. p. 400. An interesting account of this remarkable scholar will be found in the *Bibliotheca Hispana Vetus* II. *pp.* 149-50.

chivalry. The pious pilgrimages, too, contributed to the same result. Many of the knights or palmers, on their return from the East, brought with them the knowledge, not only of Greek, but of more than one of the oriental languages besides. The long imprisonments to which, during the holy wars, and the Latin campaigns against the Turks, they were often subjected, supplied another occasion of familiarity with Arabic, Syriac, Turkish, or Persian.

The commercial enterprise of the Western Nations, and especially of the Venetians and Genoese, was a still more powerful instrument of the interchange of languages. Few modern voyagers have possessed more of that spirit of travel which is the best aid towards the acquisition of foreign tongues, than the celebrated Marco Polo. It is hard to suppose that he can have returned from his extensive wanderings in Persia, in Tartary, in the Indian Archipelago, and in China and Tibet, without some tincture of their languages. Still less can this be supposed of his countryman, Josaphat Barbaro, who sojourned for sixteen years among the Tartar tribes.* It was in the commercial settlements of the Venetians in the Levant that the profession of interpreters, of which I shall have to speak hereafter, and which has since become hereditary in certan families, was originated or brought to perfection.†

It is only, however, from the revival of letters, properly so called, that the history of linguistic studies can be truly said to commence.

The attention of Scholars, in the first instance, was chiefly directed towards the classical languages and the languages of the Bible. The Greek scholars who were driven to the West by the Moslem occupation of Constantinople brought their language, in its best and most attractive form, to the Universities

* The Family of Barbaro produced many distinguished linguists, according to the opportunities of the time. Francesco Barbaro, born in 1398, was one of the earliest eminent Greek scholars of Italy. Ermolao, the commentator on Aristotle, was said by the wits of his time to have been such a purist in Greek, that he did not stop at consulting the devil when he was at a loss for the precise meaning of a word—the much disputed ἐντελέχεια of Aristotle!—See Bayle's Dict. Hist. Art. *Barbaro* I. 473.

† Venice was long remarkable for her encouragement of skill in living languages. It was a necesary qualification for most of her diplomatic appointments; and, while Latin, in Europe, was still the ordinary medium of diplomatic intercourse, we find a Venetian ambassador to England, in 1509, Badoer, capable of conversing like a native in English, French, and German.—See an interesting paper, "Venetian Dispatches," in the Quarterly Review, vol. xcvi. p. 369.

of Italy. In the Council of Florence, in 1438, more than one Italian divine, especially Ambrogio Traversari, was found capable of holding discussions with the Greek representatives in their native tongue. In like manner, the Jews and Moors, who were exiled from Spain by the harsh and impolitic measures of Ferdinand and Isabella, deposited through all the schools of Europe the seeds of a solid and critical knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic and their cognate languages. The fruits of their teaching may be discerned at a comparatively early period in the biblical studies of the time. Antonio de Lebrixa published, in 1481, a grammar of the Latin, Castilian and Hebrew languages: and I need only allude to the mature and various oriental learning which Cardinal Ximenes found ready to his hand, in the very first years of the sixteenth century, for the compilation of the Complutensian Polyglot. Although some of the scholars whom he engaged, as for instance, Demetrius Ducas, were Greeks; and others, as Alfonzo Zamora or Pablo Coronell,* were converted Jews; yet, the names of Lopez de Zuniga, Nunez de Guzman, and Vergara† are a sufficient evidence of the success with which the co-operation of native scholars was enlisted in the undertaking.‡

From this period the number of scholars eminent in the department of languages becomes so great, and the history of many among them presents so frequent points of resemblance, that it may conduce to the greater distinctness of the narrative to classify separately the most distinguished linguists of each among the principal nations.

§ I. LINGUISTS OF THE EAST.

Although the inquiry must of course commence with the East, the cradle of human language, unfortunately the materials for this portion of the subject are more meagre and imperfectly preserved than any other.

In the East indeed, the faculty of language appears, for the most part, in a form quite different from what we shall find among the scholars of the West. The Eastern linguists, with a few exceptions, have been eminent as mere *speakers* of languages, rather than scholars even in the loosest sense of the word.

* M'Crie's Reformation in Spain, I. p. 61. See also Hallam's Literary History, I. p. 197.

† See the Bibliotheca Hispana, vol. I. pref. p. vii.

‡ See Hefele's *Der Cardinal Ximenes:* one of the most interesting and learned biographies with which I am acquainted, p. 124.

As it is in the East that the office of *Dragoman* or "interpreter" first rose to the dignity of a profession, so all the most notable Oriental linguists have belonged to that profession.

A very remarkable specimen of this class occurs in the reign of Soliman the Magnificent, and flourished in the early part of the sixteenth century. A most interesting account is given of him, under his Turkish name of Genus Bey, by Thevet, in that curious repertory—his *Cosmographie Universelle.** He was the son of a poor fisherman, of the Island of Corfu; and while yet a boy, was carried away by pirates and sold as a slave at Constantinople. Thence he was carried into Egypt, Syria, and other Eastern countries; and he would also seem to have visited most of the European kingdoms, or at least to have enjoyed the opportunity of intercourse with natives of them all. His proficiency in the languages both of the East and West, drew upon him the notice of the Sultan, who appointed him his First Dragoman, with the rank of Pasha. Thevet (who would seem to have known him personally during his wanderings,) describes him in his quaint old French, as "the first man of his day for speaking divers sorts of languages, and of the happiest memory under the Heavens." He adds, that this extraordinary man "knew perfectly no fewer than sixteen languages, viz: Greek, both ancient and modern, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Moorish, Tartar, Armenian, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, Spanish, German, and French." Genus Bey, was, of course, a renegade; but, from a circumstance related by Thevet, he appears to have retained a reverence for his old faith, though not sufficiently strong to be proof against temptation. He was solicited by some bigoted Moslems to remove a bell, which the Christians had been permitted to erect in their little church. For a time he refused to permit its removal; but at last he was inducedby a large bribe, to accede to the demand. Thevet relates that, in punishment of his sacrilegious weakness, he was struck with that loathsome disease which smoteKing Herod,and perished miserably in nine days from the date of this inauspicious act.

In Naima's "Annals of the Turkish Empire," another renegade, a Hungarian by birth, is mentioned, who spoke fourteen languages, and who, in consequence of this accomplishment, was employed during a siege to carry a message through the lines of the blockading army.†

* Vol. II., p. 788.

† Naima's Annals of the Turkish Empire, translated by M. Frazer, for the Oriental Translation Society. For this fact I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Watts, of the British Museum, but I am unable to refer to the passage.

A still more marvellous example of the gift of languages is mentioned by Duret, in his *Tresor des Langues* (p. 964)—that of Jonadab, a Jew of Morocco, who lived about the same period. He was sold as a slave by the Moors, and lived for twenty-six years in captivity in different parts of the world. With more constancy to his creed, however, than the Corfu christian, he withstood every attempt to undermine his faith or to compel its abjuration; and, from the obduracy of his resistance, received from his masters the opprobrious name *Alhanar*, "the serpent" or "viper." Duret says that Jonadab spoke and wrote twenty-eight different languages. He does not specify their names, however, nor have I been able to find any other allusion to the man.

It would be interesting, if materials could be found for the inquiry, to pursue this extremely curious subject through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and especially in the military and commercial establishments of the Venetians in the Morea and the islands. The race of Dragomans has never ceased to flourish in the Levant. M. Antoine d'Abbadie informed me that there are many families in which this office, and sometimes the consular appointment for which it is an indispensable qualification, have been hereditary for the last two or three centuries; and that it is very common to find among them men and women who, sufficiently for all the ordinary purposes of conversation, speak Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, English, German, and French, with little or no accent. This accomplishment is not confined to one single nation. Mr. Burton, in his "Pilgrimage to Medinah and Meccah," mentions an Afghan who "spoke five or six languages."* He speaks of another, a Koord settled at Medinah, who "spoke five languages in perfection." The traveller, he assures us, "may hear the Cairene donkey-boys shouting three or four European dialects with an accent as good as his own;" and he "has frequently known Armenians (to whom, among all the Easterns, he assigns the first place as linguists) speak, besides their mother tongue, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hindostanee, and at the same time display an equal aptitude for the Occidental languages."†

But of all the Eastern linguists of the present day the most notable seem to be the ciceroni who take charge of the pilgrims at Mecca, many of whom speak fluently every one of the numerous languages which prevail over the vast region of the Moslem. Mr. Burton fell in at Mecca with a one-eyed Hadji,

* Pilgrimage to El Medinah, II. p. 368.
† Ibid. I., p. 179.

who spoke fluently and with good accent Turkish, Persian, Hindostani, Pushtu, Armenian, English, French, and Italian.* In the "Turkish Annals" of Naima, already cited, the learned Vankuli Mohammed Effendi, a contemporary of Sultan Murad Khan, is described as "a perfect linguist."† Many similar instances might, without much difficulty, be collected; nor can it be doubted that, among the numerous generations which have thus flourished and passed away in the East, there may have been rivals for Genus Bey, or even for "the Serpent" himself. But unhappily their fame has been local and transitory. They were admired during their brief day of success, but are long since forgotten; nor is it possible any longer to recover a trace of their history. They are unknown,

Carent quia vate sacro.‡

It would be a great injustice, however, to represent this as the universal character of the Eastern linguists. On the contrary, it has only needed intercourse with the scholars of the West in order to draw out what appears to be the very remarkable aptitude of the native Orientals for the scientific study of languages. Thus the learned Portuguese Jew, Rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657), was not only a thorough master of the Oriental languages, but was able to write with ease and exactness several of the languages of the West, and published almost indifferently in Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, and English.§ I allude more particularly, however, to those bodies of Eastern Christians, which, from their community of creed with the Roman Church, have, for several centuries, possessed ecclesiastical establishments in Rome and other cities of Europe.

* Burton's Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah. III., 368.

† Annals of the Turkish Empire, p. 45.

‡ A melancholy instance of the capriciousness of this sort of reputation, and of the unhappiness by which, in common with many other gifts, it is often accompanied, is recorded in the Paris journals of the early part of this year. A man apparently about fifty years old, named Tinconi, a native of Constantinople, was found dead at his lodgings in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, having perished, as it afterwards appeared, of hunger. This ill-fated man was possessed of an ample fortune, and had held high diplomatic appointments; and, besides being well-versed in ancient and modern literature, he spoke not fewer than ten languages, and knew several others! Yet almost the only record of his varied accomplishments is that which also tells the story of his melancholy end!

§ See his life by Pococke, prefixed to the translation of his work *De Termino Vitæ*. 1699.

The Syrians had been remarkable, even from the classic times,* for the patient industry with which they devoted themselves to the labour of translation from foreign languages into their own. Many of the modern Syrians, however, have deserved the still higher fame of original scholarship.

The Maronite community of Syrian Christians has produced several scholars of unquestioned eminence. Abraham Echellensis was one of the chief assistants of Le Jay, at Paris, in the preparation of his Polyglot. His services in a somewhat similar capacity at Rome are familiar to all Oriental scholars. But it is to the name of Assemani that the Maronite body owes most of its reputation. For a time, indeed, literature would seem to have been almost an inheritance in the family of Assemani. It has contributed to the catalogue of Oriental scholars no less than five of its members—Joseph Simon, who died in 1768; his nephews, Stephen Evodius and Joseph Lewis; Joseph Aloysius, who died at Rome in 1782; and Simon, who died at Padua in 1821. The first of them is the well-known editor of the works of St. Ephrem, and author of the great repertory of Oriental ecclesiastical erudition, the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*.

The Greeks, with greater resources, and under circumstances more favourable, are less distinguished as linguists. John Matthew Caryophilos, a native of Corfu, who was archbishop of Iconium and resided at Rome in the early part of the seventeenth century, was a learned Orientalist, and, besides several literary works of higher pretension, published some elementary books on the Chaldee, Syriac, and Coptic languages. But he has few imitators among his countrymen. Leo Allatius (Allazzi), although a profound scholar, and familiar with every department of the literature of the West, whether sacred or profane,† can hardly be considered a linguist in the ordinary

* See Dr. Paul De Lagarde's learned dissertation, "De Geoponicon Versione Syriacâ" (p. 3, Leipsig, 1855). This dissertation is an account of a hitherto unknown Syriac version of the "Scriptores Rei Rusticæ" which Dr. De Lagarde discovered among the Syriac MSS. of the British Museum. He has also transcribed from the same collection many similar remains of Syriac literature, partly sacred, partly profane, which he purposes to publish at intervals. Some of the former especially, as referring to the Ante-Nicene period, are, like those already published by Mr. Cureton, of great interest to students of Christian antiquity, although the same drawback—doubt as to their age and authorship—must affect the doctrinal value of them all.

† This laborious and prolific writer, whose works fill nearly 20

sense of the word. The same may be said of the many Greek students, as, for instance, Metaxa, Meletius Syrius, and others, who, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, repaired to the universities of Italy, France, and even England.* It can hardly be doubted, of course, that many of them acquired a certain familiarity with the languages of the countries in which they sojourned, but no traces of this knowledge appear to be now discoverable. By far the most notable of them, Cyrillus Lucaris, the well-known Calvinistic Patriarch of Constantinople, spoke and wrote fluently Arabic, Greek, Latin, and Italian; but, if his latinity be a fair sample of his skill in the other languages, his place as a linguist must be held low indeed.† It should be added, however, that as polyglot speakers, the Greeks have long enjoyed a considerable reputation. The celebrated Panagiotes Nicusius‡ (better known by his Italianized name Panagiotti) obtained, despite all the prejudices of race, the post of First Dragoman of the Porte, about the middle of

volumes, is said to have used the same pen for no less than forty years, and to have been thrown almost into despair upon its accidental destruction at the end of that period.

* Some of these visited the English universities. Of one among the number, named Metrophanes Critopulus, who was sent by Cyrillus Lucaris to be indoctrinated in Anglican Theology, and who lived at Oxford at the charge of archbishop Abbott, a very amusing account is given by the disappointed prelate in a letter quoted by Neale (History of Alexandria, II., 413-5.) He turned out "an unworthy fellow," far from ingenuity or any grateful respect," a "rogue and beggar," and in other ways disappointed the care bestowed on him.

† One specimen may suffice, which is furnished by Mr. Neale: "*Collavi (I have collated)* sua notata cum textu Bellarmini." Neale, II., p. 402. The Easterns seldom seem at home in the languages of Europe; Italian, and still more French orthography, is their great puzzle. I have seen specimens of Oriental Italian which, for orthography, might rival "Jeames's" English, or the French of Augustus the Strong.

‡ Panagiotes was a native of Scio, and was known in his later life under the sobriquet of "the Green Horse," in allusion to a local proverb, that "it is easier to find a green horse than a wise man in Scio." The appellation was the highest tribute that could be rendered to the prudence and ability of Panagiotes; but it is also a curious confirmation of the evil repute, as regards honesty, in which the islanders of the Egean were held from the earliest times. The reader will probably remember the satirical couplet of Phocylides about the honesty of the Lerians, which Porson applied, in a well-known English parody, to the Greek scholarship of Herrmann.

—— Λέριοι κάκοι ὥστε ὁ μὲν ὃς δ' ὅ
Πάντες πλὴν Πεισιλέως καὶ Πεισίλεως Λέριος

the seventeenth century; and, from his time forward, the office was commonly held by a Greek, until the separation of Greece from the Ottoman Empire.

Mr. Burton's observation that no natives of the East seem to possess the faculty of language in a higher degree than the Armenians, is confirmed by the experience of all other travellers; and the commercial activity which has long distinguished them, and has led to their establishing themselves in almost all the great European centres of commerce, has tended very much to develope this national characteristic. A far higher spirit of enterprise has led to the foundation of many religious establishments of the Armenians in different parts of Europe, which have rendered invaluable services, not only to their own native language and literature, but to Oriental studies generally. Among these the fathers of the celebrated Mechitarist order have earned for themselves, by their manifold contributions to sacred literature, the title of the Benedictines of the East. The publications of this learned order (especially at their principal press in the convent of San Lazzaro, Venice,) are too well known to require any particular notice. Most of their publications regard historical or theological subjects; but many also are on the subject of language,* as grammars, dictionaries, and philological treatises. A little series of versions, the Prayers of St. Nerses in twenty-four languages, printed at their press, is one of the most beautiful specimens of polyglot typography with which I am acquainted. Among the scholars of the order the names of Somal, Rhedeston, Ingigean, Avedichian, Minaos, and, above all, of the two Auchers, are the most prominent. One of the latter is best known to English readers as the friend of Byron, his instructor in Armenian, and his partner in the compilation of an Anglo-Armenian grammar. The fathers of this order generally, however, both in Vienna and in Italy, have long enjoyed the reputation of being excellent linguists. Visitors of the Armenian convent of St. Lazzaro at Venice cannot fail to be struck by this accomplishment among its inmates. Besides

* An elaborate account of them will be found in Neumann's *Versuch einer Geschichte der Armenischen Literatur*. Leipzig, 1836. On the exceeding importance of the Armenian language for the general study of the entire Indo-Germanic family, see the extremely learned essay, "*Urgeschichte der Armenier, ein Philologischer Versuch.* (Berlin, 1854.) It is published anonymously, but is believed to be from the pen of the distinguished Orientalist named in page 22.

the ordinary Oriental languages, most of them speak Italian' French, and often German. I have heard from M. Antoine d'Abbadie that, in 1837, Dr. Pascal Aucher spoke no less than twelve languages.

§ II. LINGUISTS OF ITALY.

The most prominent among the nations of the West at the period immediately succeeding the Revival of Letters, is of course Italy.

The first in order, dating from this period, among the linguists of Italy, is also in many respects the most remarkable of them all;—at least as illustrating the possibility of uniting in a single individual the most diversified intellectual attainments, each in the highest degree of perfection;—the celebrated Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, son of the Duke John Francis of that name.* He was born in 1463, and from his childhood was regarded as one of the wonders of his age. Before he had completed his tenth year, he delivered lectures in civil and canon law, not less remarkable for eloquence than for learning. While yet a boy he was familiar with all the principal Greek and Latin classics. He next applied himself to Hebrew; and, while he was engaged in that study, a large collection of cabalistic manuscripts, which were represented to him as genuine works of Esdras, turned his attention to the other Eastern languages, and especially the Chaldee, the Rabbinical dialect of Hebrew, and the Arabic. Unfortunately, the strange and fantastic learning with which he was thus thrown into contact gave a tinge to his mind, which appears to have affected all his later studies. His progress in languages, however, cannot but be regarded as prodigious, when we consider the poverty of the linguistic resources of his age. At the age of eighteen he had the reputation of knowing no fewer than twenty-two languages, a considerable number of which he spoke with fluency. And while he thus successfully cultivated the department of languages, he was, at the same time, an extraordinary proficient in all the other knowledge of his day. His memory was so wonderful as to be reckoned among the

* I do not think it necessary to mention (though he is a little earlier) Felix of Ragusa, the principal librarian, or rather book collector, of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary. He is said to have known, besides Greek and Latin, the Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac languages.

marvellous examples of that gift which are enumerated by the writers upon this faculty of the human mind. Cancellieri states that he was able, after a single reading, not only to recite the contents of any book which was offered to him, but to repeat the very words of the author, and even in an inverted order.* In 1486 he maintained a thesis in Rome, *De omni Re Scibili.* Much of the learning which it displayed was certainly of a very idle and puerile character; much of it, too, was the merest pedantry; but nevertheless it is undeniable that the nine hundred propositions of which it consisted, comprised every department of knowledge cultivated at that period. And it is impossible to doubt that, if Pico's career had been prolonged to the usual term of human life, his reputation would have equalled that of the greatest scholars, whether of the ancient or the contemporary world. He was cut off, however, at the early age of thirty-one.

It is not unnatural to suppose that this circumstance, as well as the rank of Pico, and the singular precocity of his talents, may have led to a false or exaggerated estimate of his acquirements. But, even allowing every reasonable deduction on this score, his claim must be freely admitted to the character of one of the greatest wonders of his own or any other age, whether he be considered as a linguist or as a general scholar.

Marvellous, however, as is the reputation of Pico della Mirandola, perhaps the science of language owes more to a less brilliant but more practical scholar of the same period, Teseo Ambrosio, of the family of the Albonesi. He was born at Pavia, in 1469. His admirers have not failed to chronicle such precocious indications of genius as his composing Italian, Latin, and even Greek poetry, before he was fifteen; but he himself confesses that his proficiency in these studies dates from a considerably later time. He entered the order of Canons Regular of St. Augustine, and fixed his residence at Rome, where he devoted himself with great assiduity to Oriental studies, and acquired such a reputation, that when, in the Lateran Council of 1512, the united Ethiopic and Maronite Christians solicited the privilege of using their own peculiar liturgies while they maintained the communion of the Roman church, it was to him the task of examining those liturgies, and of ascertaining how far their teaching was in accordance with the doctrines of the Church, was entrusted by the Holy See. Teseo assures us that, at the time when he received this

* Sugli Uomini di gran Memoria, p. 27.

commission, he knew little more than the elements of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic. He set to work with the assistance of a native Syrian (who, however, was entirely ignorant of Latin); and, carrying on their communication by mutual instruction, he was soon able not only to master the difficulties of these languages, but to set on foot what may be regarded as (at least conjointly with the Complutensian Polyglot) one of the earliest systematic schemes for the promotion of Oriental studies. He had types cast expressly for his projects; and he himself prepared the Chaldee Psalter for the press, and repaired to his native city of Pavia for the purpose of having it printed. He died (1539) before it was completed;* but his types were turned to account by other scholars. It was with Teseo's types that William Postel printed two out of the five Pater Nosters contained in his collection—the Chaldee and the Armenian.† And to him we owe a still greater boon—the first regular attempt at a Polyglot Grammar; which, however imperfectly, comprises the elements of Chaldee, Syriac, Armenian, and ten other languages.

The scholarship of Ambrogio was derived almost entirely from books. His countryman, Antonio Pigafetta, enjoyed among his contemporaries a different reputation, that of considerable skill as a speaker of foreign languages, acquired during his extensive and protracted wanderings. Pigafetta was born at Vicenza, towards the end of the fifteenth century. In the expedition undertaken, under the patronage of Charles V., for the conquest of the Moluccas, by the celebrated Fernando Magellan, the first circumnavigator of the globe, one of the literary staff was Pigafetta, who acted as historiographer of the expedition, and to whose narrative we are indebted for all the particulars of it, which have been preserved.

Marzari describes Pigafetta as a prodigy of learning; and, although this has been questioned by later inquirers,‡ there is no reason to doubt his acquirements in modern languages at

* The history of this MS. is a strange one. In the sack of Pavia by the French under Lautrec, it was carried off among the plunder. Teseo was in despair at the loss, and was returning to Rome with a sad heart. At Ferrara, he chanced to see a quantity of papers at a charcoal burner's, just on the point of being consigned to the furnace. What was his delight to find his precious Psalter among them! He began the printing of it at Ferrara without delay, but did not live to see its completion

† Adelung's Mithridates, I., 646. See also Biogr. Universelle, II., p. 25.

‡ Biograph. Univ. XV. 239.

least, and particularly his skill and success in obtaining information as to the languages of the countries which he visited. It is to him* we are indebted for the first vocabularies of the language of the Philippine and Molucca islands, the merit of which is recognized even by recent philologers.†

It may be permitted to class with the linguists of Italy, a Corsican scholar of the same period, Augustine, bishop of Nebia. It is difficult to pronounce definitively as to the extent of his attainments; but his skill in the ancient languages, at least, is sufficiently attested by the polyglot Bible which he published, (containing the Hebrew, Greek, Chaldee, and Arabic texts,) of which Sixtus of Sienna speaks in the highest terms; and if we could receive without qualification the statement of the same writer, we should conclude that Augustine's familiarity with modern languages was even more extensive. Sixtus of Sienna describes him as "deeply versed in the languages of all the nations which are scattered over the face of the earth."

Towards the close of the sixteenth century the study of languages in Italy assumed that practical character in relation to the actual exigencies of missionary life by which it has ever since been mainly characterized in that country. The Oriental press established at Florence by the Cardinal Ferdinand de Medici, under the superintendence of the great orientalist Giambattisa Raimondi;‡ the opening at Rome of the College *De Propaganda Fide*; the foundation of the College of San Pancrazio, for the Carmelite Oriental Missions in 1662; the opening of similar Oriental schools in the Dominican, the Franciscan, Augustinian, and other orders, for the training of candidates for their respective missions in the East; and above all, the constant intercourse with the Eastern missions which began to be maintained, gave an impulse to Oriental studies,

* There is another Pigafetta (Felippo), some years the junior of Antonio, who was also a very extensive traveller, having visited Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Croatia, Hungary, the Ukraine, and the northern kingdoms. He was sent into Persia on a diplomatic mission by Sixtus V. But I have not been able to find any record of his skill in languages.

† Thevet's *Thresor des Langues*, p. 964.

‡ Raimondi had spent many years in the East, and was acquainted with most of the Oriental languages, living and dead. He projected a polyglot bible which should contain the Arabic, Syriac, Persic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Coptic versions, accompanied by the Grammars and Dictionaries of these languages. But the death of Gregory XIII., on whose patronage he mainly relied for the execution of his project, put a stop to the undertaking.

the more powerful and the more permanent, because it was founded on motives of religion; and although we do not meet among the missionary linguists that marvellous variety of languages which excites our wonder, yet we find in them abundant evidences of a solid and practical scholarship, whose fruits, if less attractive, are more useful and more enduring. Nearly all the linguists of Italy from the close of the sixteenth century, appears to have been either actually missionaries, or connected with the colleges of the foreign mission.

Thus, Antonio Giggei, one of the "Oblates of Mary," taught Persian in a missionary college, at Milan, and, at a later period, taught Arabic in Florence. Giggei's *Thesaurus Linguæ Arabicæ*,* is still much esteemed. He wrote besides, a Grammar of Chaldee and of Rabbinical Hebrew, which is still preserved in manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan; and his translation of a Rabbinical commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon, published at Milan in 1620, is an evidence of his familiarity, not only with Biblical Hebrew, but with the language of the Talmud in all its successive phases.

In like manner, Clemente Galani, the eminent Armenian scholar, spent no less than twelve years as a missionary in Armenia. On his return to Rome, in 1650, he was such a proficient in the language that he was able, not only to write both in Armenian and Latin his well-known work on the conformity of the creeds of the Armenian and Roman Churches,† but also to deliver theological lectures to the Armenian students in Rome in their native tongue.‡

Tommaso Ubicini was a Franciscan missionary in the Levant.§ He was born at Novara, and entered young into the order of Friar-minors. He was named guardian of the Franciscan convent in Jerusalem; and, during a residence of many years, made himself master, in addition to Hebrew and Chaldee,

* A copy of this work is found in the Catalogue of Cardinal Mezzofanti's Library, by Signor Bonifazi. It is in 4 vols., fol., Milan, 1632.

† Conciliatio Ecclesiæ Armenæ cum Romana, ex ipsis Armenorum Patrum et Doctorum Testimoniis. 2 vols fol., Romæ 1658—It is in Bonifazi's Catalogue of the Mezzofanti Library, p. 20.

‡ Feller's Dict. Biog. art. *Galani.*

§ The learned Jesuit, Father Giambattista Ferrari, author of the *Nomenclator Syrus*, is an exception to the general rule. He does not appear to have been a member of any of the Eastern missions. Angelo Canini, the eminent Syriac scholar, though born in Italy, belongs rather to the French school.

of the Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic languages. The latter years of his life were spent in the convent of San Pietro in Montorio at Rome; where, besides publishing several works upon these languages, he taught them to the students of his order. His great work, *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus* was not published till 1636, several years after his death.*

Ludovico Maracci, best known to English readers by the copious use to which Gibbon has turned his translation and annotations of the Koran, was one of the missionary "Clerks of the Mother of God." He was born at Lucca in 1612, and first obtained notice by the share which he had in the Roman edition of the Arabic Bible, published in 1671 He taught Arabic for many years with great distinction in the University of the Sapienza at Rome. But his best celebrity is due to his critical edition of the Koran, and the admirable translation which accompanies it.† From this repertory of Arabic learning, Sale has borrowed, almost without acknowledgment, or rather with occasional depreciatory allusions, all that is most valuable in his translation and notes.

One of Maracci's pupils, John Baptist Podestà, (born at Fazana early in the 17th century), is another exception to the general rule. Having perfected his Oriental studies in Constantinople, he was appointed Oriental Secretary of the Emperor Leopold at Vienna, and attained considerable reputation as Professor of Arabic in that university. He published a Grammar of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish; which, however, was severely, and, indeed, ferociously, criticised by his contemporary and rival, Meninski.

But Podestà's contemporary, Paolo Piromalli, was trained in the school of the Mission. He was a native of Calabria, and became a member of the Dominican order. Piromalli was for many years attached to the Mission of his order in Armenia, and was eminently successful in reconciling the separated Armenians to the Roman Church, having even the happiness to number among his converts the schismatical patriarch himself. From Armenia, Piromalli passed into the Missions of Georgia and Persia. He afterwards went, in the capacity of Apostolic Nuncio, to Poland, with a commission of much importance to the Emperor from the Pope, Urban VIII.

* Wadding assigns his death to the year 1638; but it is clear from the preface of the Thesaurus that he was dead several years before its publication, which was in 1636.

† *Alcorani Textus Universus.* 2 vols. fol., Padua, 1698.

In the course of one of his voyages he was made prisoner by the Algerine corsairs, and carried as a slave to Tunis; but he was soon after redeemed and called to Rome, whence, after he had been entrusted with the revision of an Armenian Bible, he was sent back to the East, as Bishop of Nachkivan in 1655. He remained in this charge for nine years, and was called home as Bishop of Bisignano, where he died in 1667. Piromalli published two dictionaries, Persian and Armenian, and several other works upon these languages.*

The Augustinian order in Italy, also, produced a linguist, not inferior in solidity, and certainly superior in range of attainments, to any of those hitherto enumerated—Antonio Agostino Giorgi.† He was born at San Mauro, near Rimini, in 1711, and entered the Augustinian order at Bologna; but Benedict XIV., who, during his occupancy of the see of Bologna, had become acquainted with his merit, invited him to Rome after his elevation to the Papacy, and appointed him to a professorship in the Sapienza. Father Giorgi occupied this post with much distinction for twenty-two years, till his death, in 1797. His acquirements as a linguist were more various than those of any of the scholars hitherto named. Besides modern languages, he knew not only Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, and Syriac, but also Coptic and (what was at that period a much more rare accomplishment) Tibetan. On the last named language he compiled an elementary work for the use of missionaries, which, although it is not free from inaccuracies, deserves, nevertheless, the highest praise as a first essay in that till then untried language.

Simon De Magistris, one of the priests of the Oratory, (born at Ferrara in 1728) was for many years at the head of the Congregation of the Oriental Liturgies in Rome. He was not only deeply versed in the written languages of the East, but spoke the greater number of them with the same ease and fluency as his native Italian.‡

Of the learned Dominican, Finetti, I am unable to offer any particulars. His treatise "On the Hebrew and its cognate Languages" is a sufficient evidence of his ability as an Orientalist; but it contains no indication of anything beyond the learning which is acquired from books.

* Biogr. Uni. XV. 263, (Brussels Ed.)

† He must not be confounded with a German Orientalist, Christopher Sigismund Georgi, who lived about the same time.

‡ Biographie Universelle, Vol. XXVI, p. 128.

The same may be said of the Oratorian, Valperga de Galuso. He was born at Turin in 1737, but lived chiefly in the convents of his order at Naples, Malta, and Rome. In addition, however, to his accomplishments as an Orientalist, Padre de Galuso had the reputation of being one of the most skilful mathematicians of his day. He died in 1815.

Our information regarding the two De Rossi's, Ignazio, author of the *Etymologicum Copticum*, and Giambernardo, of Parma, is more detailed and more satisfactory.

Ignazio de Rossi was born at Viterbo in 1740, and entered the Jesuit society at a very early age. In the schools of Macerata, Spoleto, and Florence, he was employed in teaching the Humanities and Rhetoric until the suppression of the order in 1773,; after which event he repaired to Rome, and received an appointment as professor of Hebrew in the University, which he held for thirty years, rejoining his brethren, however, at the first moment of their restoration under Pius VII.

As a general scholar, Father De Rossi was one of the first men of his day. His memory may be ranked among the most prodigious of which any record has been preserved. On one occasion, during the *villeggiatura* at Frascati, it was tried by a test in some respects the most wonderful which has ever been applied in such cases. A line being selected at pleasure from any part of any one of the four great Italian classics, Dante, Petrarca, Tasso, and Ariosto, De Rossi immediately repeated the hundred lines *which followed next in order* after that which had been chosen; and, on his companions expressing their surprise at this extraordinary feat (which he repeated several times), he placed the climax to their amazement by reciting *in the reverse order* the hundred lines immediately *preceding* any line taken at random from any one of the above-named poets.* His reputation as an Orientalist was founded chiefly upon his familiarity with Hebrew and the cognate languages. But he was also a profound Coptic scholar; and it is a subject of regret to many students of that language that his numerous MSS. connected therewith have been suffered to remain so long unpublished. He died in 1824.

Giovanni Bernardo de Rossi was a linguist of wider range.

* For this interesting anecdote of Father Ignazio de Rossi, I am indebted to Cardinal Wiseman, who learned it from the companions of the good old father upon the occasion. His Eminence added, that it was done as a mere amusement, and without the least effort or the remotest idea of preparation.

He was born at Castel Nuovo, in Piedmont, in 1742, and in his youth was destined for the ecclesiastical state. He began his collegiate studies at Turin, and manifested very early that taste for Oriental literature which distinguished his after life. Within six months after he commenced his Hebrew studies, he produced a long Hebrew poem. In addition to the Biblical Hebrew, he was soon master of the Rabbinical language, of Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. He learned besides, by private study, most of the languages of modern Europe;—his plan being to draw up in each a compendious grammar for his own use. In this way he prepared grammars of the German, English, and Russian languages. In 1769, he obtained an appointment in the Royal Museum at Turin; but, being invited at the same time to undertake the much more congenial office of Professor of Oriental Languages in the new University of Parma, he gladly transferred himself to that city, where he continued to reside, as Professor of Oriental Literature, for more than forty years. During the latter half of this period, De Rossi maintained a frequent correspondence with Mezzofanti, upon the subject of their common studies.* From the terms in which such a scholar as Mezzofanti speaks of De Rossi, and the deference with which he appeals to his judgment, we may infer what his acquirements must have been. On occasion of the marriage of the Infante of Parma, Charles Emanuel, he published a polyglot epithalamium,†—a Collection of Hymeneal Odes in various languages—which even still is regarded as the most extraordinary of that class of compositions‡ ever produced by a single individual. It does not belong to my present plan to allude to the works of De Rossi, or to offer any estimate of his learning; but without entering into any such particulars, or attempting to specify the languages with which he was acquainted, it may safely be said that no Italian linguist

* Through the kindness of the Cavaliere Pezzana, Royal Librarian and Privy Councillor of Parma, I have been fortunate enough to obtain copies of some of Mezzofanti's letters to De Rossi, which will be found in their chronological order hereafter.

† It is a magnificent folio, entitled "Epithalamia Exoticis Linguis Reddita;" one of the most curious productions of the celebrated press of Bodoni. Parma, 1775.

‡ The *Panglossia* in honour of Peiresc was the work of many hands, and cannot fairly be compared with the Epithalamia of De Rossi. I have never seen a copy of the latter, nor does De Rossi himself, in his modest autobiography, (*Memorie Storiche*, Parma, 1807, p. 19), enumerate the languages which it contained.

from the days of Pico della Mirandola can be compared with him, either in the solidity or the extent of his linguistic attainments. De Rossi died in 1831.*

The fame of the linguists of Italy during the nineteenth century has been so completely eclipsed by that of Mezzofanti, that I shall not venture upon any enumeration of them, though the list would embrace such names as Rossellini, Luzatto, Molza, Laureani, &c. There are few of whom it can be said with so much truth as of Mezzofanti:—

Prœgravat artes
Infra se positas.

§ III. SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LINGUISTS.

The catalogue of Spanish linguists opens with a name hardly less marvellous than that which I have placed at the head of the linguists of modern Italy—that of Fernando di Cordova;—one of those universal geniuses, whom Nature, in the prodigal exercise of her creative powers, occasionally produces, as if to display their extent and versatility. He was born early in the fifteenth century, and was hardly less precocious than his Italian rival, Pico della Mirandola. At ten years of age he had completed his courses of grammar and rhetoric. He could recite three or four pages of the Orations of Cicero after a single reading. Before he attained his twenty-fifth year, he was installed Doctor in all the faculties; and he is said by Feyjoo to have been thorough master (supo con toda la perfeccion) of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic. Feyjoo adds, that he knew, besides, all the principal European languages.† He could repeat the entire Bible from memory. He was profoundly versed in theology, in civil and canon law, in mathematics, and in medicine. He had at his perfect command all the works of St. Thomas, of Scotus, of Alexander of Hales, of Galen, Avicenna, and the other lights of the age in every department of science.‡ Like the Admirable Crichton, too, he was one of the most accomplished gentlemen and most distinguished cavaliers of his time. He could play on every known variety of instrument; he sang exquisitely; he was a most

* The ingenious mechanician, Prince Raimondo di Sansevero, of Naples, had some name as a linguist. He is said to have known Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and several modern languages. But his knowledge was very superficial.

† *Theatro Critico*, IV., p. 401, Art. *Glorias de Espuña.*

‡ *Bibliotheca Hispana*, Vol. IV., p. 75.

graceful dancer; an expert swordsman; and a bold and skilful rider; and he was master of one particular art of fence by which he was able to defeat all his adversaries, by springing upon them at a single bound of twenty-three or twenty-four yards! In a word, to adopt the enthusiastic panegyric of the old chronicler on whose simple narrative these statements rest, "if you could live a hundred years without eating or drinking, and were to give the whole time to study, you could not learn all that this young man knew."* The occasion to which this writer, quoting Monstrelet's Chronicle,† refers was the Royal Fête at Paris in 1445; so that Fernando must have been born about 1425. Of his later history but little is known. He was sent as ambassador to Rome in 1469, and died in 1480.

A Portuguese of the same period, Pedro de Covilham, is mentioned by Damian a Goes in his curious book, *De Ethiopum Moribus* in terms which, if we could take them literally, should entitle him to a place among the linguists. During the reign of John II. of Portugal (1481-95) Covilham, who had already distinguished himself as an explorer under Alfonzo V., was sent, in company with Alfonzo de Payva, in search of the kingdom of Prester John, which the traditional notions of the time placed in Abyssinia. Payva died upon the expedition. Covilham, after visiting India, the Persian Gulf, and exploring both the coasts of the Red Sea, at length reached Abyssinia, where he was received with much distinction by the King. He married in the country, and obtained large possessions; but, in accordance with a law of Abyssinia‡ similar to that which still exists in Japan, prohibiting any one who may have once settled in the country ever again to leave it, he was compelled to adopt Abyssinia as a second

* Thus amusingly "Englished" in Wanley's "Wonders of the Little World," p. 285:—

"A young man have I seen,
At twenty years so skilled,
That every art he knew, and all
In all degrees excelled!
Whatever yet was writ,
He vaunted to pronounce
(Like a young Antichrist) if he
Did read the same but once."

† P. 457. The work was printed in the same volume with Peter Martyr's *De Rebus Oceanicis.* Cologne, 1574.

‡ Bruce's Travels, III, 134.

home. When, therefore, he was recalled by John II., the King of Abyssinia refused to relinquish him, pleading "*that he was skilled in almost all the languages of men,*" * and that he had made to him, as his own adopted subject, large grants of land and other possessions. Covilham, after a residence of thirty-three years, was still alive in 1525, when the embassy under Alvarez de Lima reached Abyssinia.

Very early in the sixteenth century, I find a notice of a Spanish convert from Judaism, called in Latin "Libertas Cominetus" (*Libertas* being, in all probability, but the translation of his Hebrew patronymic,) whose acquirements are more precisely defined. He was born at Cominedo, towards the close of the fifteenth century, and renounced his creed about 1525. His fellow-convert Galatinus, an Italian Jew, and himself no mean linguist, describes Libertas in his work "*De Arcanis Catholicæ Veritatis,*" as not only deeply versed in Holy Writ, but master of fourteen languages.† The Biographical Dictionaries and other books of reference are quite silent regarding him.

The name of Benedict Arias Montanus, editor of the so-called "King of Spain's Polyglot Bible," is better known to Biblical students. He was born at Frexenal‡ in Estremadura in 1527' and studied in the university of Alcala, then in the first freshness of the reputation which it owed to the magnificence of the great Cardinal Ximenes. Montanus entered the order of St. James, and after accompanying the Bishop of Segovia to the Council of Trent, where he appeared with great distinction, returned to the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de los Angelos near Aracena, with the intention of devoting himself entirely to study and prayer. From this retreat, however, he was drawn by Philip II., who employed him to edit a new Polyglot Bible on a more comprehensive plan than the Complutensian Polyglot. On the completion of this task, Philip sought to reward the learned editor by naming him to a bishopric; but

* Duret refers for some notice of Covilham, to the rare work of Alvarez, *De Historia Ethiopum.* In the hope of discovering something further regarding this remarkable and little-known linguist, I endeavoured to consult that author; but I have not been able to find a copy, It is not in the British Museum.

† Galatinus de Arcanis Cath. Veritatis Libri XII. (Frankfort 1572), B. III. c. 6, p. 120.

‡ There is considerable difference of opinion as to his birth-place. But Nicholas Antonio, in the Bibliotheca Hispana, says it was Frexenal. Vol, III. p. 207.

Montanus had humility and self-denial enough to decline the honour, and died an humble chaplain, in 1598. The estimate formed by his contemporaries of Montanus's attainments in languages falls little short of the marvellous. Le Mire describes him as *omnium fere gentium linguis et literis raro exemplo excultus;* but we may more safely take his own modest statement in the preface of his Polyglot, that he knew ten languages.*

The celebrated Father Martin Del Rio, best known perhaps to English readers, since Sir Walter Scott's pleasant sketch, by his vast work on Demonology, was also a very distinguished linguist. Del Rio, although of Spanish parentage, was born at Antwerp in May 1551. His first university studies were made at Paris; but he received the Doctor's degree at Salamanca, and has merited a place in Baillet's *Enfans Celebres,* by publishing an edition of Solinus, with a learned commentary, before he was twenty years old.† Del Rio's talents and reputation opened for him a splendid career; but he abandoned all his offices and all his prospects of preferment, in order to enter the Society of the Jesuits at Valladolid in 1580. According to Feyjoo,‡ Del Rio knew ten languages; and Baillet would appear to imply even more, when he says that he was master of *at least* that number. Del Rio died at Louvain in 1608.

One of Del Rio's most distinguished contemporaries, the celebrated dramatic poet, Lope de Vega, although his celebrity rests upon a very different foundation, was also a very respectable linguist, so far, at least, as regards the modern languages. The extraordinary fecundity of this author, especially when we consider his extremely chequered and busy career as a secretary, a soldier, and eventually a priest, would seem to preclude the possibility of his having applied himself to any other pursuit than that of dramatic literature. The mere physical labour of committing to paper (putting composition out of view altogether) his *fifteen hundred* versified plays,§

* Enfans Celebres, p. 198. Baillet says it was an edition of Seneca's Tragedies; but this is a mistake. The *In Senecæ Tragedias Adversaria* did not appear till 1574.

† *Teatro Critico*, IV. 401.

‡ Feyjoo IV. p. 401. "Seguramente podemos creers in alguna rebaxa." The *Bibliotheca Hispana* enumerates twelve languages, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, French, Flemish, Spanish, Italian, and English. I. p. 207.

§ This is, strange as it may seem, the lowest computation, and rests on *Lope de Vega's* own testimony, written in 1630, five years before his death. Speaking of the number of his dramatic fictions, he says to his friend,

Mil y quinientos fabulas admira.

three hundred interludes and sacred dramas*, ten epic poems, and eight prose novels, besides an infinity of essays, prefaces, dedications, and other miscellaneous pieces, would appear more than enough to occupy the very busiest human life. Yet notwithstanding all this prodigious labour, Lope de Vega contrived to find time for the acquisition of Greek, Latin, Italian, Portuguese, French, and probably English! Well might Cervantes call him "a Prodigy of Nature!"

Although the missionaries of Spain and Portugal are, as a body, less distinguished in the department of languages than those of Italy, yet there are some among them not inferior to the most eminent of their Italian brethren. The great Coptic and Abyssinian scholar, Antonio Fernandez, was a Portuguese Jesuit. He was born at Lisbon in 1566, and entered the Jesuit society as a member of the Portuguese province of the order. After a long preparatory training, he was sent, in 1602, to Goa, the great centre of the missionary activity of Portugal. His ultimate destination, however, was Abyssinia, which country he reached in 1604, in the disguise of an Armenian. He resided in Abyssinia for nearly thirty years, and was charged with a mission to the Pope Paul III. and Philip IV. of Spain, from the king, who, under the influence of the missionaries, had embraced the Catholic religion. Fernandez set out with some native companions in 1615; but they were all made prisoners at Alaba, and narrowly escaped being put to death; nor was he released in the end, except on condition of relinquishing this intended mission, and returning to Abyssinia. On the death of the king, who had so long protected them, the whole body of Catholic missionaries were expelled from Abyssinia by the new monarch in 1632; and Fernandez returned, after a most chequered and eventful career, to Goa, where he died, ten years later, in 1642. Of his acquirements in the Western languages, I am unable to discover any particulars; but he was thoroughly versed in Armenian, Coptic, and Amharic or Abyssinian, in both of which last named languages he has left several ritual and ascetic works for the use of the missionaries and native children.

By other authors the number is made much greater. According to some, as his friend, Montalvan, he wrote *eighteen hundred* plays; and Bouterwek, in his History of Spanish Literature, puts it down at the enormous estimate of *two thousand*. "*Spanish Literature*," I. p. 361.

* Montalvan says *four hundred*. The *Bibliotheca Hispana* says (vol. iv., p. 75,) "*eighteen hundred plays, and above four hundred sacred dramas.*"

The Spanish and Portuguese missionaries in America, too, (especially those of the Jesuit order) rendered good service to the study of the numerous native languages of both continents.* Most of the modern learning on the subject is derived from their treatises, chiefly manuscript, preserved by the Society.

Nor were the other orders less efficient. Padre Josef Carabantes, a Capuchin of the province of Aragon, (born in 1648) wrote a most valuable practical treatise for the use of missionaries, which was long a text book in their hands.

One of the Portuguese missionaries in Abyssinia, Father Pedro Paez, who succeeded Fernandez, and whose memory still lingers among the native traditions of the people,† not only became thorough master of the popular dialects of the various races of the Valley of the Nile, but attained a proficiency in Gheez, the learned language of Abyssinia, not equalled even by the natives themselves.‡ A Franciscan missionary at Constantinople about the same time, mentioned by Cyril Lucaris, is described by him as "acquainted with many languages;"§ but I have not been able to discover his name.

By far the most eminent linguist of the Peninsula, however, is the learned Jesuit, Father Lorenzo Hervas-y-Pandura. He was born in 1735, of a noble family, at Horcajo, in la Mancha. Having entered the Jesuit society, he taught philosophy for some years in Madrid, and afterwards in a convent in Murcia; but at length, happily for the interests of science as well as of religion, he embraced a missionary career, and remained attached to the Jesuit mission of America, until 1767. On the suppression of the order, Father Hervas settled at Cesena, and devoted himself to his early philosophical studies, which, however, he ultimately, in a great measure, relinquished in order to apply himself to literature and especially to philology. When the members of the society were permitted to re-establish themselves in Spain, Hervas went to Catalonia; but he was obliged to return to Italy, and settled at Rome, where he was named by Pius VII. keeper of

* A long list of grammars, vocabularies, dictionaries, catechisms, &c., in more than forty-five different languages, compiled by the Spanish missionaries, is given in the Bibliotheca Hispana, vol. IV. pp. 577-79.

† M. d'Abbadie assures me that Father Paez is still spoken of as "Ma alim Petros" by the professors of Gondar and Bagënndir.

‡ Neale's *History of the Patriarchate of Alexandria* (London, 1837) II. 405.

§ Letter to M. Le Leu de Wilhem, quoted by Neale, II. 402.

the Vatican Library. In this honourable charge he remained till his death in 1809.

Father Hervas may with truth be pronounced one of the most meritorious scholars of modern times. His works are exceedingly numerous; and, beside his favourite pursuit, philology, embrace almost every other conceivable subject, theology, mathematics, history, general and local, palæography; not to speak of an extensive collection of works connected with the order, which he edited, and a translation of Bercastel's History of the Church, (with a continuation), executed, if not by himself, at least under his superintendence. Besides all the stupendous labour implied in these diversified undertakings, Father Hervas has the still further merit of having devoted himself to the subject of the instruction of the deaf-mute, for whose use he devised a little series of publications, and published a very valuable essay on the principles to be followed in their instruction.*

Our only present concern, however, is with his philological and linguistic publications, especially in so far as they evince a knowledge of languages. They form part of a great work in twenty-one 4to. volumes, entitled *Idea dell' Universo;* and were printed at intervals, at Cesena, in Italian, from which language they were translated into Spanish by his friends and associates, and republished in Spain. It will only be necessary to particularize one or two of them—the *Saggio Prattico delle Lingue,* which consists of a collection of the Lord's Prayer in three hundred and seven languages, together with other specimens of twenty-two additional languages, in which the author was unable to obtain a version of the Lord's Prayer, all illustrated by grammatical analyses and annotations; and the *Catalogo delle Lingue conosciute, e Notizia delle loro Affinità e Diversita.*† In the compilation of these, and his other collections, it is true, Hervás had the advantage, not alone of his own extensive travel, and of his own laborious research, but also of the aid of his brethren; and this in an Order which numbered among its members, men to whose adventurous spirit every corner of the world had been familiar:—

* Biographie Universelle, IX. 301.

† Of the latter work I have never seen the Italian original. I know it only from the Spanish *Catalogo de las Lenguas de las naciones conocidas, y numeracion, division, y clases de estas, segun la Diversidad de sus idiomas y dialectos.* 6 vols 4to. Madrid, 1800-5.

" In Greenland's icy mountains,
On India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand."

But he, himself, compiled grammars of no less than eighteen of the languages of America; which, with the liberality of true science, he freely communicated to William von Humboldt for publication in the *Mithridates* of Adelung. He was a most refined classical scholar and a profound Orientalist. He was perfectly familiar, besides, with almost all the European languages; and, wide as is the range of tongues which his published works embrace, his critical and grammatical notes and observations, even upon the most obscure and least known of the languages which they contain, although in many cases they have of course all the imperfections of a first essay, exhibit, even in their occasional errors, a vigorous and original mind.

The name of Father Hervas-y-Pandura is a fitting close to the distinguished line of linguistic "Glorias de Espana."

§ IV. FRENCH LINGUISTS.

The University of Paris did not enter into the study of languages so early, or with so much zeal as the rival schools of Spain and Italy.

The first* great name in this department which we meet in the history of French letters, is that of the celebrated Rabbinical scholar, William Postel. This extraordinary man was born at Dolerie in 1510. Having lost both his parents at a very early age, he was left entirely dependent upon his own exertions for support; and, with that indomitable energy which often accompanies the love of knowledge, he began, from his very boyhood, a systematic course of self-denial, by which he hoped to realize the means of prosecuting the studies for which he had conceived an early predilection. Having scraped together, in the laborious and irksome occupation of a school-master, what he regarded as a sufficient sum for his modest wants, he repaired to Paris; but he had scarcely

* Anthony Rodolph Chevalier, a Hebraist of some eminence, born in Normandy in 1507, three years before Postel, has perhaps some claim to be mentioned before him, inasmuch as several of his versions are inserted in Walton's Polyglot; but his history has hardly any interest.

reached that city, when he was robbed by some designing sharpers, of the fruits of all his years of self-denial; and a long illness into which he was thrown by the chagrin and privation which ensued, reduced him to the last extremity. Even still, however, his spirit was unbroken. He went to Beauce, where, by working as a daily labourer, he earned the means of returning to Paris as a poor scholar. Presenting himself at the College of Saint Barbara, he obtained a place as a servant, with permission to attend the lectures; and having in some way got possession of a Hebrew grammar, he contrived, in his stolen half hours of leisure, to master the language so thoroughly, that in a short time his preceptors found themselves outstripped by their singular dependent.

His reputation as an Oriental scholar spread rapidly. When La Fôret's memorable embassy to the Sultan was being organized by Francis 1., the king was recommended to entrust to Postel a literary mission, somewhat similar to that undertaken during the reign of Louis Philippe, at the instance of M. de Villemain, one of the objects of which was to collect Greek and Oriental MSS. It was on his return from this expedition, (in which he visted Constantinople, Greece, Asia Minor, and part of Syria,) that Postel met Teseo Ambrosio at Venice, and published what may be said to have been the first systematic attempt as yet made to bring together materials for the philosophical investigation of the science of language—being a collection of the alphabets of twelve languages, with a slight account of each among the number.* He was soon after appointed Professor of Mathematics, and also of Oriental Languages, in the College de France; but the wild and visionary character of his mind appears to have been quite unsuited to any settled pursuit. He had conceived the idea that he was divinely called to the mission of uniting all Christians into one community, the head of which he recognized in Francis I. of France, whom he maintained to be the lineal descendant of Sem, the eldest of the sons of Noah. Under the notion that this was his pre-ordained vocation, he refused to accompany La Fôret on a second mission to the East, although he was pressed to do so by the king himself, and a sum of four thousand crowns was placed at his disposal for the purchase of manuscripts. He offered himself, in preference, to the newly founded society of the Jesuits; but his unsuitableness for that state soon became so apparent, that St. Ignatius of Loyola, then superior of the society, refused

* See Adelung's Mithridates, I. 646. Postel published in the same year, the first grammar of the Arabic language ever printed. Paris 1538.

to receive him. After many wanderings in France, Italy, and Germany, and an imprisonment in Venice, (where his fanaticism reached its greatest height,) he undertook a second expedition to the East, in 1549, whence he returned in 1551, with a large number of valuable MSS. obtained through the French ambassador, D'Aramont, but wilder and more visionary than ever. He resumed his lectures in the College des Lombards, now the property of the Irish College in Paris. The crowds who flocked to hear him were so great, that they were obliged to assemble in the court, where he addressed them from one of the windows. His subsequent career was a strange alternation of successes and embroilments. The Emperor Ferdinand invited him to Vienna, as Professor of Mathematics. While there, he assisted Widmandstadt in the preparation of his Syriac New Testament. He left Vienna, however, after a short residence, and betook himself to Italy, in 1554 or 1555. He was put into prison in Rome, but liberated in 1557. In 1562 he returned to Paris. The extravagancies of his conduct and his teaching led to his being placed under a kind of honourable surveillance, in 1564, in the monastery of St. Martin des Champs, near Paris. Yet so interesting was his conversation that crowds of the most distinguished of all orders continued to visit him in this retreat till his death in 1581. Postel's attainments in languages living or dead, were undoubtedly most extensive. Not reckoning the modern languages, which he may be presumed to have known, his Introduction exhibits a certain familiarity with not less than twelve languages, chiefly eastern; and he is said to have been able to converse in most of the living languages known in his time. Duret states, as a matter notorious to all the learned, that he "knew, understood, and spoke fifteen languages;"* and it was his own favourite boast, that he could traverse the entire world without once calling in the aid of an interpreter. In addition to his labours as a linguist, Postel was a most prolific writer. Fifty-seven of his works are enumerated by his biographer.

It is to this learned but eccentric scholar that we owe the idea of the well-known polyglot collections of the Lord's Prayer. These compilations as carried out by later collectors, have rendered such service to philology, that, although many of their authors were little more than mere compilers, and have but slender claims to be considered as linguists, in the higher sense of the word, it would be unpardonable to pass them over without notice in a Memoir like the present.

* *Thresor de l'Histoire de toutes les Langues de cet Univers.* Cologne, 613, p. 964.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, a Hungarian soldier named John Schildberger, while serving in a campaign against the Turks in Hungary, was made prisoner by the enemy; and on his return home, after a captivity of thirty-two years, published (in 1428) an account of his adventures. He appended to his travels, as a specimen of the languages of the countries in which he had sojourned, the Lord's Prayer in Armenian, and also in the Tartar tongue. This, however, was a mere traveller's curiosity: but Postel's publication (Paris, 1558) is more scientific. It contains specimens of the characters of twelve different languages, in five of which—Chaldee, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Armenian, the Pater Noster is printed both in Roman characters and in those of the several languages. This infant essay of Postel was followed, ten years after, by the collection of Theodore Bibliander, (the classicized form of the German name *Buchmann*,) which contains fourteen different Pater Nosters. Conrad Gesner, in 1555, increased the number to twenty-two, to which Angelo Rocca, an Augustinian Bishop, added three more (one of them Chinese) in 1591. Jerome Megiser, in 1592, extended the catalogue to forty. John Baptist Gramaye, a professor in Louvain, made a still more considerable stride in advance. He was taken prisoner by the Algerine corsairs, in the beginning of the next century, and after his return to Europe, collected no fewer than a hundred different versions of the Pater Noster, which he published in 1622. But his work seems to have attracted little notice; for more than forty years later, (1668) a collection made by Bishop Wilkins, the learned linguist, to whom I shall hereafter return, contains no more than fifty.

In all these, however, the only object appears to have been to collect as large a number of languages as possible, without any attention to critical arrangement. But, in the latter part of the same century, the collection of Andrew Müller (which comprises eighty-three Pater Nosters) exhibits a considerable advance in this particular. Men began, too, to arrange and classify the various families. Francis Junius (Van der Yonghe) published the Lord's Prayer in nineteen different languages of the German family; and Nicholas Witsen devoted himself to the languages of Northern Asia—the great Siberian family,—in eleven of which he published the Lord's Prayer in 1692. This improvement in scientific arrangement, however, was not universal; for although the great collection of John Chamberlayne and David Wilkins, printed at Amsterdam in 1715, contains the Lord's Prayer in a hundred and fifty-two lan-

guages, and that of Christian Frederic Gesner—the well-known *Orientalischer und Occidentalischer Sprachmeister* (Leipzic 1748)—in two hundred, they are both equally compiled upon the old plan, and have little value except as mere specimens of the various languages which they contain.*

It is not so with a collection already described, which was published near the close of the same century, by a learned Spanish Jesuit, Don Lorenzo Hervas y Pandura. It is but one of that vast variety of philological works from the same prolific pen which, as I have stated, appeared, year after year, in Cesena, originally in Italian, though they were all afterwards published in a Spanish translation, in the author's native country. Father Hervas's collection, it will be remembered, contains the Lord's Prayer in no less than *three hundred and seven* languages, besides hymns and other prayers in twenty-two additional dialects, in which the author was not able to find the Pater Noster.

Almost at the very same time with this important publication of Hervas, a more extensive philological work made its appearance in the extreme north, under the patronage and indeed the direct inspiration, of the Empress Catherine II. of Russia. The plan of this compilation was more comprehensive than that of the collections of the Lord's Prayer. It consisted of a Vocabulary of two hundred and seventy-three familiar and ordinary words, in part selected by the Empress herself, and drawn up in her own hand. This Vocabulary, which is very judiciously chosen, is translated into two hundred and one languages. The compilation of this vast comparative catalogue of words was entrusted to the celebrated philologer, Pallas, assisted by all the eminent scholars of the northern capital; among whom the most efficient seems to have been Bakmeister, the Librarian of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg. The opportunities afforded by the patronage of a sovereign who held at her disposition the services of the

* Adelung, in the appendix of the first volume of his *Mithridates*, has enumerated several other Pater Nosters, Thevet, Vulcanius (the latinized form of *Smet*), Merula, Duret, Mauer Waser, Reuter, Witzen, Bartsch, Bergmann, and others. None of these collections, however, possesses any special interest, as bearing on the present inquiry, nor does it appear that any of the authors was particularly eminent as a speaker of languages; unless we are to presume that Thevet, Duret, Gramaye, and Witzen, may, in their long travel or sojourn in foreign countries, have acquired the languages of the nations among whom they lived. Of the last three names I shall say a few words hereafter.

functionaries of a vast, and, in the literal sense of the word, a polyglot empire like Russia, were turned to the best account. Languages entirely beyond the reach of private research, were unlocked at her command; and the rude and hitherto almost unnamed dialects of Siberia, of Northern Asia, of the Halieutian islanders, and the nomadic tribes of the Arctic shores, find a place in this monster vocabulary, beside the more polished tongues of Europe and the East. Nevertheless, the Vocabulary of Pallas (probably from the circumstance of its being printed altogether in the Russian character)* is but little familiar to our philologers, and is chiefly known from the valuable materials which it supplied to Adelung and his colleagues in the compilation of the well-known *Mithridates*.

The *Mithridates* of Adelung closes this long series of philological collections; but although in its general plan, it is only an expansion of the original idea of the first simple traveller who presented to his countrymen, as specimens of the languages of the countries which he had visited, versions in each language of the Prayer which is most familiar to every Christian, yet it is not only far more extensive in its range than any of its predecessors, but also infinitely more philosophical in its method. There can be no doubt that the selection of a prayer so idiomatical, and so constrained in its form as the Lord's Prayer, was far from judicious. As a specimen of the structure of the various languages, the choice of it was singularly infelicitous; and the utter disregard of the princi-

* A portion of the edition contains a Latin preface, explanatory of the plan and contents; but the majority of the copies have this preface in Russian; and, in all, the character employed throughout the body of the work is Russian. This character, however, may be mastered with so little difficulty, that, practically, its adoption can hardly be said to interfere materially with the usefulness of the work; and the use of the Russian character had many advantages over the Roman, in accurately representing the various sounds, especially those of the northern languages.

An alphabetical digest (4 vols. 4to. 1790-1) of all the words contained in the Vocabulary (arranged in the order of the alphabet without reference to language) was compiled, a few years later, by Theodor Jankiewitsch de Miriewo, by which it may be seen at once to what language each word belongs. But this digest is described as unscientific in its plan and execution; and it was commonly believed that the Empress was so dissatisfied with it, that the work was suppressed and is now extremely rare; but I have been informed by Mr. Watts of the British Museum, that copies of it are now not unfrequently offered for sale. A copy has been for some years in the British Museum.

ples of criticism (and in truth of everything beyond the mere multiplication of specimens), which marks all the early collections, is an additional aggravation of its original defect. But it is not so in the *Mithridates* of Adelung. It retains the Lord's Prayer, it is true, like the rest, as the specimen (although not the only one) of each language; but it abandons the unscientific arrangement of the older collections, the languages being distributed into groups according to their ethnographical affinities. The versions, too, are much more carefully made; they are accompanied by notes and critical illustrations; and in general, each language or dialect, with the literature bearing upon it, is minutely and elaborately described. In a word, the *Mithridates*, although, as might be expected, still falling far short of perfection, is a strictly philosophical contribution to the study of ethnography; and has formed the basis, as well as the text, of the researches of all the masters in the modern schools of comparative philology.*

To return, however, to the personal history of linguists, from which we have been called aside by the mention of the work of Postel.

A celebrity as a linguist equally distinguished, and even more unamiable, than Postel's, is that of his countryman and contemporary, the younger of the two Scaligers.

Joseph Justus Scaliger was born at Agen in 1544, and made his school studies at Bordeaux, where he was only remarkable for his exceeding dulness, having spent three years in a fruitless, though painfully laborious, attempt to master the first rudiments of the Latin language. These clouds of the morning, however, were but the prelude of a brilliant day. His after successes were proportionately rapid and complete. The stories which are told of him seem almost legendary. He is said to have read the entire Iliad and Odyssey in twenty-one days, and to have run through the Greek dramatists and lyric poets in four months. He was but seventeen years old when he produced his Œdipus. At the same age he was able to speak Hebrew with all the fluency of a Rabbi. His application to study was unremitting, and his powers of endurance are described as beyond all example. He himself tells, that even in the darkness of the night, when he awoke from his brief slumbers, he was able to read without lighting

* It is true that some part of its materials have since become superannuated by the fuller and more accurate researches of later investigators, (see Bunsen's Christianity and Mankind, III. 47.) But it is nevertheless a work even still of immense value.

his lamp !* So powerful, according to his own account, was his eye-sight, that like the knight of Deloraine:—

> "Alike to him was tide and time,
> Moonless midnight, and matin prime!"

After a brilliant career at Paris, he was invited to occupy the chair of Belles Lettres at Leyden, where the best part of his life was spent. Like most eminent linguists, Scaliger possessed the faculty of memory in an extraordinary degree. He could repeat eighty couplets of poetry after a single reading: he knew by heart every line of his own compositions, and it was said of him that he never forgot anything which he had learnt once. But with all his gifts and all his accomplishments, he contrived to render himself an object of general dislike, or at least of general dis-esteem. His vanity was insufferable; and it was of that peculiarly offensive kind which is only gratified at the expense of the depreciation of others. His life was a series of literary quarrels; and in the whole annals of literary polemics, there are none with which, for acrimony, virulence, and ferocity of vituperation, these quarrels may not compete. And hence, although there is hardly a subject, literary, antiquarian, philological, or critical, on which he has not written, and (for his age) written well, there are few, nevertheless, who have exercised less influence upon contemporary opinion. Scaliger spoke thirteen languages, in the study of which Baillet† says he never used either a dictionary or a grammar. He himself declares the same. The languages ascribed to him are strangely jumbled together in the following lines of Du Bartas:—

> —— "Scaliger, merveille de notre age,
> Soleil des savants, qui parle elegamment
> Hebreu, Greçois, Romain, Espagnol, Allemand,
> Françoís, Italien, Nubien, Arabique,
> Syriaque, Persian, Anglois, Chaldaique."‡

In his case it is difficult, as in most others, to ascertain the degree of his familiarity with each of these. To Du Bartas's poetical epithet, *elegamment*, of course, no importance is to be attached; and it would perhaps be equally unsafe to rely on

* Strange and incredible as this anecdote may seem, it is told seriously by Scaliger himself, who adds that the same extraordinary power was possessed also by Jerome Cardan and by his father. See the curious article in *Moreri*, *voce* "Scaliger."

† Enfans Celebres, p. 196.

‡ An equally eulogistic epigram, by Heinsius, is quoted by Hallam. Literary History, II. 35.

the depreciatory representations of his literary antagonists. One thing, at least, is certain, that he himself made the most of his accomplishment. He was not the man to hide his light from any overweening delicacy. He was one of the greatest boasters of his own or any other time. In one place he boasts that there is no language in which he could write with such elegance as Arabic.* In another he professes to write Syriac as well as the Syrians themselves.† And it is curiously significant of the reputation which he commonly enjoyed, that the wits of his own day used to say that there was one particular department of each language in which there could be no doubt of his powers—its Billingsgate vocabulary! There was not one, they confessed, of the thirteen languages to which he laid claim, in which he was not fully qualified to scold!‡

The eminent botanist, Charles Le Cluse, (Clusius), a contemporary of Scaliger, can hardly be called a great linguist, as his studies were chiefly confined to the modern European languages, with several of which he was thoroughly conversant; but he is remarkable as having contributed, by a familiarity with modern languages very rare among the naturalists of his day, to settle the comparative popular nomenclature of his science. He is even still a high authority on this curious branch of botanical study.

The reader who remembers the extraordinary reputation enjoyed among his contemporaries by the learned Nicholas Peiresc, may be disappointed at finding him overlooked in this enumeration: but, as of his extraordinary erudition he has left no permanent fruit in literature, so of his acquirements as a linguist no authentic record has been preserved. The same is true of his friend, Galaup de Chasteuil, a less showy, perhaps, but better read orientalist. Through devotion to these studies, quite as much as under the influence of religious feeling, Chasteuil made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and, in 1631, permanently fixed his abode in Palestine; and so thoroughly conversant did he become, not only with the language and literature, but also with the manners, usages and feelings of the Maronites of the Lebanon, that, on the death of their

* Scaligeriana, p. 130. This collection is the first of the series of *anas* since so popular.

† Ibid. p. 232.

‡ On Scaliger's powers of abuse, see M. Nisard's brilliant and amusing Triumvirat Literaire au XVI. Siecle, p. 296, 302, 305, &c. The "triumvirs" are Lipsius, Scaliger and Casaubon.

patriarch, despite the national predilections by which all Easterns are characterized, they desired to elect him, a Western as he was, head of their national church.* Lewis de Dieu, the two Morins—Stephen, the Calvinist minister, and John, the learned Oratorian convert—the two Cappels, Lewis and James, and even the celebrated D'Herbelot, author of the *Bibliotheque Orientale*, all belong rather to the class of oriental scholars than of linguists in the popular acceptation of the word. The two Cappels, as well as their adversaries, the Buxtorfs, are best known in connexion with the controversy about the Masoretic Points.

One of the writers named in a previous page, Claude Duret, although Adelung† could not discover any particulars regarding him, beyond those which are detailed in the title of his book, (where he is merely described as "Bourbonnais, President a Moulins,") nevertheless deserves very special mention on account of the extensive and curious learning, not alone in languages, but also in general literature, history and science, which characterize his rare work, *Thresor de l'Histoire des Langues de cet Univers.*‡ This work is undoubtedly far from being exempt from grave inaccuracies; but it is nevertheless, for its age, a marvel, as well of curious learning and extensive research, as of acquaintance with a great many (according to one account, seventeen,) languages, both of the East and of the West.§ How much of this, however, is mere book-scholarship, and how much is real familiarity, it is impossible, in the absence of all details of the writer's personal history, to decide.

Although far from being so universal a linguist as Duret, the great biblical scholar, Samuel Bochart (born at Rouen in 1599) was much superior to him in his knowledge of Hebrew and the cognate languages, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and even Coptic. His *Hierozoicon* and *Geographia Sacra*, as monuments of philological as well as antiquarian knowledge, have maintained a high reputation even to the present time, notwithstanding

* Feller's Dict. Biograph., vol. V. p. 312.

† Mithridates, I. 650.

‡ Cologne 1615.

§ I cannot help thinking that Adelung quite underrates this curious work. I have seldom consulted it but with pleasure or profit. And the concluding chapter, "on the language of animals and of birds," on which great ridicule has been thrown, is in reality a very curious, interesting, and judicious essay.

the advantages enjoyed by modern students of biblical antiquities and history.*

Bochart's pupil and his friend in early life, (although they were bitterly alienated from each other at a later period, and although Bochart's death is painfully associated with their literary quarrel†) the celebrated Peter Daniel Huet, can hardly deserve a place in the catalogue of French linguists; but he was at least a liberal and enlightened patron of the study.

Many of the French missionaries of the seventeenth century would deserve a place in this series, and among them especially Francis Picquet, who, after serving for several years as French consul at Aleppo, embraced a missionary life, and at last was consecrated Archbishop of Bagdad in 1674. Le Jay, the projector and editor of the well-known polyglot Bible which appeared in France a few years before the rival publication of Brian Walton, though he is often spoken of as the mere patron of the undertaking, was in reality a very profound and accomplished Orientalist. The same may be said of Rapheleng, the son-in-law of Plantin, and often described as his mere assistant in the publication of the King of Spain's Polyglot Bible. Matthew Veysiere de la Croze, too, the apostate Benedictine, although a superficial scholar and a hasty and inaccurate historian, was a very able linguist.

But, as we descend lower in the history of this generation of French linguists, we find comparatively few names which, for variety of attainments, can be compared with those of Italy or Germany. Beyond the cultivation of the Biblical languages, little was done in France for this department of study during the rest of the seventeenth century. There seems but too much reason to believe that the reputation of the learned but

* Mr. Kenrick, in the preface of his recent work on Phœnicia, confesses that "the most diligent reader of ancient authors with a view to the illustration of Phœnician history, will find himself anticipated or surpassed by Bochart."

† Bochart's death was the consequence of a fit with which he was seized during a vehement dispute which he had with Huet, in the academy of Caen in 1667, respecting the authenticity of some Spanish medals. Huet appears to have long felt the memory of it painfully. He alludes to it in a letter to his nephew, Piadore de Chersigne, above forty years afterwards; and seems to console himself by thinking that Bochart's death "ne lui fut causèe par notre dispute, sinon en partie." It is curious that Disraeli has overlooked this in his "Quarrels of Authors."

pedantic Menage as a linguist, is extravagantly exaggerated. He was an accomplished classicist, and his acquaintance with modern languages was tolerably extensive. He was a good etymologist, too, according to the servile and unscientific system of the age. But his claims to Oriental scholarship appear very questionable. And in truth during this entire period, if it were not for the interest of the controversy above referred to, on the antiquity and authority of the Masoretic Points, it might almost be said that Oriental studies had fallen entirely into disuse in France Even of those who took a part in that discussion, the name of Masclef (who knew Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldee, and Arabic, with perhaps some of the modern languages) is the only one which can approach the rank of the higher masters of the study. The three Buxtorfs (father, son, and grandson), Guarin, and even Girandeau, were mere Hebraists; patient and accurate scholars, it is true, but with few of the characteristics of an eminent linguist. La Bletterie can hardly claim even this qualified reputation.

There is one brilliant exception—the eminent historian and controversialist, Eusebius Renaudot. He was born at Paris in 1646. Having made his classical studies under the Jesuits, and those of Philosophy in the College d'Harcourt, he entered the congregation of the Oratory. But he very soon quitted that society; and, although he continued to wear the ecclesiastical dress, he never took holy orders. His life, however, was a model of piety and of every Christian virtue; and it was his peculiar merit that, while many of his closest friends and most intimate literary allies were members of the Jansenist party, Renaudot was inflexible in his devotion to the judgment of the Holy See. His first linguistic studies lay among the Oriental languages, the rich fruit of which we still possess in his invaluable Collection of Oriental Liturgies, and in the last two volumes of the *Perpetuitè de la Foi sur l'Eucharistie,* which are also from his prolific pen. But he soon extended his researches into other fields; and he is said to have been master of seventeen languages,* the major part of which he spoke with ease and fluency.

But Renaudot stands almost alone.† The only names which

* Feller's Dict. Biograph. vol. X. p. 476.

† Perhaps I ought to mention Renaudot's contemporary, the Jesuit, Father Claude Francis Menestrier, (1631-1704), although

may claim to be placed in comparison with his, are those of the two Petis, François Petis, and François Petis de la Croix. The latter especially, who succeeded his father as royal Oriental interpreter, under Lewis XIV., and made several expeditions to the East in this capacity, was well versed, not only in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Tartar, but also in Coptic and Armenian. His translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments is the work by which he is best known; but his dissertations and collections on Oriental history are full of valuable learning. The eighteenth century in France was a period of greater activity. Etienne Fourmont, although born in 1683, belongs properly to the eighteenth century. He is often cited as an example of extraordinary powers of memory, having, when a mere boy, learnt by rote the whole list of Greek Roots in the Port Royal Treatise, so as to repeat them in every conceivable order. He soon after published in French verse all the roots of the Latin language. But it is as an Orientalist that he is chiefly remarkable. He was appointed to the chair of Arabic in the College Royal, and also to the office of Oriental interpreter in the Bibliotheque du Roi; and soon established such a reputation as an Orientalist, that he

not a great linguist, is at least notable for the rather rare accomplishment of speaking Greek with remarkable propriety and fluency, and still more for his prodigious memory, which Queen Christina of Sweden tried by a very singular ordeal. She had a string of three hundred words, the oddest and most unconnected that could be devised, written down without the least order or connexion, and read over once in Menestrier's presence. He repeated them in their exact order, without a single mistake or hesitation!—*Biographie Univ., Vol. XXVIII., p.* 293.

A still more extraordinary example of this power of memory is related by Padre Menocchio (the well-known Biblical commentator, Menochius) of a young Corsican whom Muret met at Padua, and who was not only able to repeat in their regular order a jumble of words similar to that described above, but could repeat them *backwards, and with various other modifications!* The youth assured Muret that he could retain in this way 36,000 words, and that he would undertake to keep them in memory for an entire year! See Menocchio's *Stuore*, Part III., p. 89. The *Stuore* is a miscellaneous collection, compiled by this learned Jesuit during his hours of recreation. He called the work by this quaint title (Ang. "*Mats*") in allusion to the habit of the ancient monks, who used to employ their leisure hours in weaving *mats*, in the literal sense of the word. This fanciful title is not unlike that chosen by Clement of Alexandria for a somewhat similar miscellany, his Στρώματα [Tapestry], or perhaps the more literal one "Patchwork," assumed by a popular writer of our own time.

was consulted on philological questions by the learned of every country in Europe. He was thoroughly master of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Persian, and was one of the first French scholars who, without having visited China,* attained to any notable proficiency in Chinese.

His nephew, Michael Angelo Deshauterayes, born at Conflans Ste. Honorine, near Pontoise, 1724, was even more precocious. At the age of ten, he commenced his studies under Fourmont's superintendence. He thus became familiar at an early age with Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Chinese; so that in his twenty-second year he was appointed to succeed his uncle as Oriental Interpreter to the Royal Library, to which post, a few years later, was added the Arabic professorship in the College de France. In these employments he devoted himself to Oriental studies for above thirty years.

Another pupil of Fourmont, Joseph de Guignes, born at Pontoise in 1721, attained equal eminence as an Orientalist. At Fourmont's death, he was associated with the last named linguist on the staff of the Royal Library. But De Guignes' merit in the department of Oriental history and antiquities has almost overshadowed his reputation as a mere linguist, although he was a proficient in all the principal Eastern languages, and in many of those of Europe. His History of the Huns, Turks, Moguls, and other Tartar nations, notwithstanding that many of its views are now discarded, is still regarded as a repertory of Oriental learning; and, while both in this and also in some others of his works, De Guignes is often visionary and even paradoxical,† he is acknowledged to have done more for Chinese literature in France, than any linguist before Abel Remusat; nor is there one of the scholars of the eighteenth century, who in the spirit, if not in the letter, of the views which he put forward, comes so near to the more enlarged and more judicious theories of the scholars of our own day, on the general questions of philology.

* Many of the French missionaries in China, of course, were distinguished Chinese scholars. The Dictionary of Pere Amiot, for example, although not published till after his death, is still a standard work. It was edited by Langlès in 1789-90.

† For instance his *Memoire dans le quel on pronve que les Chinois sont une Colonie Egyptienne*; a notion which was warmly controverted by his fellow pupil, Deshauterayes. De Guignes argues from the supposed resemblance of the Chinese and Phœnician characters. His great Chinese Dictionary, with Klaproth's supplement, (2 vols. fol. [illegible]s. 1813-19) is in Mezzofanti's Catalogue, p. 6.

From the days of De Guignes the higher departments of linguistic science fell for a time into disrepute in France; but a powerful impulse was given to the practical cultivation of Oriental languages by the diplomatic relations of that kingdom with Constantinople and the Levant. The official appointments connected with that service served to supply at once a stimulus to the study and an opportunity for its practice. Cardonne, Ruffin,* Legrand, Kieffer, Venture de Paradis, and Langlés, were all either trained in that school, or devoted themselves to the study as a preparation for it.

Of these, perhaps John Michael Venture De Paradis is the most remarkable. His father had been French Consul in the Crimea, and in various cities of the Levant, and appears to have educated the boy with a special view to the Oriental diplomatic service. From the College de Louis le Grand, he was transferred, at the age of fifteen, to Constantinople, and, before he had completed his twenty-second year, he was appointed interpreter of the French embassy in Syria. Thence he passed into Egypt in the same capacity, and, in 1777, accompanied Baron de Tott in his tour of inspection of the French establishments in the Levant. He was sent afterwards to Tunis, to Constantinople, and to Algiers; and eventually was attached to the ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, with the Professorship of Oriental Languages. His last service was in the memorable Egyptian expedition under Bonaparte, in which he fell a victim to fatigue, and the evil effects of the climate, in 1799.†

Lewis Matthew Langlés‡ was a Picard, born at Peronne, in 1763. From his boyhood he too was destined for the diplomatic service; and studied first at Montdidier, and afterwards in Paris, where he obtained an employment which afforded him considerable leisure for the pursuit of his favourite studies. He learned Arabic under Caussin de Perceval, and Persian under Ruffin. Soon afterwards, however, he engaged in the study of Mantchu, and in some time became such a proficient in that language, that he was entrusted with the task of editing the Mantchu Dictionary of Pere Amiot. From that time his reputation was established, at least with

* Although of French parents, Ruffin was born in 1742 at Salonica, where his father was living in the capacity of chief interpreter of France. Feller, vol XI., p. 163.

† Biogr. Univ. XIX., 172 (Brussels ed.)

‡ Biogr. Univ., vol. LXX., p. 189-200.

the general public. His subsequent publications in every department of languages are numerous beyond all precedent. He had the reputation of knowing, besides the learned languages, Chinese, Tartar, Japanese, Sanscrit, Malay, Armenian, Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. But it must be added that the solidity of these attainments has been gravely impeached, and that by many he is regarded more as a charlatan than as a scholar.

No such cloud hangs over the fame of, after De Guignes, the true reviver of Chinese literature, Abel Remusat.* He was born at Paris in 1788, and brought up to the medical profession; and it may almost be said that the only time devoted by him to his early linguistic studies was stolen from the laborious preparation for the less congenial career to which he was destined by his father. By a very unusual preference, he applied himself, almost from the first, to the Chinese and Tartar languages. Too poor to afford the expensive luxury of a Chinese dictionary, he compiled, with incredible labour, a vocabulary for his own use; and the interest created at once by the success of his studies, and by the unexampled devotedness with which they were pursued, were so great as to procure for him, at the unanimous instance of the Academy of Inscriptions, the favour, at that period rare and difficult, of exemption from the chances of military conscription. From that time forward he applied himself unremittingly to philological pursuits; and, although he was admitted doctor of the faculty of medicine, at Paris in 1813, he never appears to have practised actively in the profession. On the creation of the two new chairs of Chinese and Sanscrit, in the College de France, after the Restoration, Remusat was appointed to the former, in November, 1814; from which period he gave himself up entirely to literature. He was speedily admitted into all the learned societies both of Paris and of other countries; and in 1818 he became one of the editors of the *Journal des Savans*. On the establishment (in which he had a chief part,) of the Société Asiatique, in 1822, he was named its perpetual secretary; and, on the death of Langlés, in 1824, he succeeded to the charge of keeper of Oriental MSS. in the Bibliotheque du Roi. This office he continued to hold till his early and universally lamented death in 1832. Remusat's eminence lay more in the

* Auguste Herbin, a few years Remusat's senior (having been born at Paris 1783), was cut off in the very commencement of a most promising career as an Orientalist. He died in 1806, before he had completed his twenty-fourth year.

depth and accuracy of his scholarship in the one great branch of Oriental languages, which he selected as his own—those of Eastern Asia—and in the profoundly philosophical spirit which he brought to the investigation of the relations of these languages to each other, and to the other great families of the earth, than in the numerical extent of his acquaintance with particular languages. But this, too, was such as to place him in the very first rank of linguists.

A few words must suffice for the French school since Remusat, although it has held a very distinguished place in philological science. The Société Asiatique, founded at Remusat's instance, and for many years directed by him as secretary, has not only produced many eminent individual philologers, as De Sacy, Quatremere, Champollion, Renan, Fresnel, and De Merian; but, what is far more important, it has successfully carried out a systematic scheme of investigation, by which alone it is possible, in so vast a subject, to arrive at satisfactory results. M. Stanislas Julien's researches in Chinese; M. Dulaurier's in the Malay languages; Father Marcoux's in the American Indian; Eugene Bourmouf's in those of Persia; the brothers Antoine and Arnauld d'Abbadie in the languages of East Africa, and especially in the hitherto almost unknown Abyssinian and Ethiopian families; Eugene Borè in Armenian;* M. Fresnel's explorations among the tribes of the western shores of the Red Sea; and many similar successful investigations of particular departments, are contributing to lay up such a body of facts, as cannot fail to afford sure and reliable data for the scientific solution by the philologers of the coming generation, of those great problems in the science of language, on which their fathers could only speculate as a theory, and at the best could but address themselves in conjecture. Although I have no intention of entering into the subject of living French linguists, yet there is one of the gentlemen whom I have mentioned, M. Fulgence Fresnel, whom I cannot refrain from alluding to before I pass from the subject of French philology. His name is probably familiar to the public at large, in connexion with the explorations of the French at Nineveh; but he is long known to the readers of the Journal Asiatique as a linguist not unworthy of the very highest rank in that branch

* M. Eugene Borè has been in Armenia what the two D'Abbadies have been in Abyssinia—at once a scholar and a missionary—the pioneer of religion and civilization, no less than of science.

of scholarship. M. d'Abbadie,* himself a most accomplished linguist, informed me that M. Fresnel, although exceedingly modest on the subject of his attainments, has the reputation of knowing twenty languages. The facility with which he has acquired some of these languages almost rivals the fame of Mezzofanti. M. Arago having suggested on one occasion the desirableness of a French translation of Berzelius's Swedish Treatise "On the Blow-pipe," Fresnel at once set about learning Swedish, and in three months had completed the desired translation! He reads fluently Hebrew, Greek, Romaic, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and what little is known of the Hieroglyphical language. He is second only to Lane as an Arabic scholar. Among the less known languages of which M. Fresnel is master, M. d'Abbadie heard him speak a few sentences of one, of which he may be said to have himself been the discoverer, and which is, in some respects, completely anomalous. M. Fresnel describes this curious language in the Journal Asiatique, July, 1838. It is spoken by the savages of Mahrak; and as it is not reducible to any of the three families, the Aramaic, the Canaanitic, or the Arabic, of which, according to Gesenius, the Ethiopic is an elder branch, M. Fresnel believes it to be the very language spoken by the Queen of Saba! Its present seat is in the mountainous district of Hhacik, Mirbât, and Zhafâr. Its most singular characteristic consists it its articulations, which are exceedingly difficult and most peculiar. Besides all the nasal sounds of the French and Portuguese, and that described as the "sputtered sound" of the Amharic, this strange tongue has three articulations, which can only be enunciated with *the right side of the mouth;* and the act of uttering them produces a contortion which destroys the symmetry of the features! M. Fresnel describes it as "horrible, both to hear and to see spoken." Endeavouring to represent the force of one of these sounds by the letters *hh*, he calls the language *Ehhkili.*†

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable assistance on many points which I have received, in the form both of information and of suggestion, at the hands of this distinguished philologist and traveller. I am but speaking the common feeling of the learned of every country, when I express a hope that, before long, the world may be favoured with the results of his long and laborious researches in the language, literature, and history of Ethiopia.

† Journ. Asiat. 3me., Serie, Vol. VI. p. 79.

§ V. LINGUISTS OF THE TEUTONIC RACE.*

If we abstract from the Sacred Languages, the German scholars were slow in turning themselves to Oriental studies. John Müller, of Königsberg, commonly known as Regiomontanus, although he had the highest repute for learning of all the German scholars of the fifteenth century, does not appear to have gone beyond the classical languages. Martin Luther, Reuchlin,† Ulrich Van Hutten, Hoogenstraet, were Hebraists and no more; John and Widmanstadt, when he wished to study Arabic, was forced to make a voyage to Spain expressly for the purpose.

The first student of German race at all distinguished by scholarship in languages, was Theodore Bibliander,‡ who, besides Greek and Hebrew, was also well versed in Arabic, and probably in many other Oriental tongues.§ The celebrated naturalist, Conrad Gesner, though perhaps not so solidly versed as Bibliander, in any one language, appears to have possessed a certain acquaintance with a greater number. His *Mithridates; de Differentiis Linguarum*,‖ resembles in plan as well as in name, the great work of Adelung. The number and variety of the languages which it comprises is extraordinary for the period. It contains the Pater Noster in twenty-two of these; and, although the observations on many of the specimens are exceedingly brief and unsatisfactory, yet they often exhibit much curious learning, and no mean familiarity with the language to which they belong.¶ Gesner's success as a

* Under this head are included all the members of the German family—Dutch, Flemings, Swedes, Danes, Swiss, &c. I have found it convenient, too, to include Hungarians (as Austrian subjects), although, of course, their proper ethnological place should be elsewhere.

† Better known by his Grecised name, Capnio (*καπνιον, Rauchlein, "a little smoke."*)

‡ Bibliander was a Swiss, born at Bischoffzell about 1500. His family name was *Buchmann* (Bookman), which, in the fashion of his time, he translated into the Greek, Bibliander.

§ Duret says they were "beyond numbering"; but so vague a statement cannot be urged too literally. *Thresor*, p. 963.

‖ Zurich 1545. It is a small 12mo.

¶ Gesner's Mithridates is perhaps remarkable as containing the earliest printed specimen of the Rothwälsches, or "Gipsy-German." He gives a vocabulary of this slang language, of about seven pages in length. It is only just to his memory to add that in his Epilogue, which is a very pleasing composition, he acknowledges the manifold imperfections of the work, and only claims the merit of opening a way for inquirers of more capacity and better opportunities of research.

linguist is the more remarkable, inasmuch as that study by no means formed his principal pursuit. Botany and Natural History might much better be called the real business of his literary life. Accordingly, Beza says of him, that he united in his person the very opposite genius of Varro and Pliny; and, although he died at the comparatively early age of forty-nine, his works on Natural History fill nearly a dozen folio volumes. Both Gesner and Bibliander fell victims, one in 1564, the other in 1565, to the great plague of the sixteenth century.

Jerome Megiser, who, towards the close of the same century compiled the more extensive polyglot collection of Pater Nosters already referred to, need scarcely be noticed. He is described by Adelung,* as a man of various, but trivial and superficial learning.

Not so another German scholar of the same age, Jacob Christmann, of Maintz. Christmann was no less distinguished as a philosopher than as a linguist. He held for many years at Heidelberg the seemingly incompatible professorships of Hebrew, Arabic, and Logic, and is described as deeply versed in all the ancient and modern languages, as well as in mathematical and astronomical science.†

It would be unjust to overlook the scholars of the Low Countries during the same period. Some of these, as for example, Drusius, and the three Schultens, father, son, and grandson, were chiefly remarkable as Hebraists. But there are many others, both of the Belgian and the Dutch schools, whose scholarship was of a very high order. Among the former, Andrew Maes (Masius,) deserves a very special notice. He was born in 1536, at Linnich in the diocess of Courtrai. In 1553 he was sent to Rome as chargé d'affaires. During his residence there, in addition to Greek, Latin, Spanish, and other European languages, with which he was already familiar, he made himself master, not only of Italian, but also of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac. He is said‡ to have assisted Arias Montanus in the compilation of his Polyglot Bible; but of this no mention is made by Montanus in the preface. No doubt, however, can be entertained of his great capacity as an Orientalist; and Sebastian Munster used to say of him that he seemed to have been brought up among

* Mithridates, I., 649.
† Biographie Universelle, Vol. VIII., 485.
‡ Feller, Vol. VIII., 136.

the Hebrews, and to have lived in the classic days of the Roman Empire. About the same period, or a few years later, David Haecx published his dictionary of the Malay languages, one of the earliest contributions to the study of that curious family. Haecx, though he spent his life in Rome, was a native of Antwerp.

John Baptist Gramaye, already named as a collector of Pater Nosters, acquired some reputation as one of the first contributors to the history of the languages of Africa, although his work is described by Adelung as very inaccurate. Gramaye was a native of Antwerp, and became provost of Arnheim and historiographer of the Low Countries. On a voyage from Italy to Spain, he fell into the hands of Algerine corsairs, who carried him to Algiers. There he was sold as a slave, and was detained a considerable time in Barbary. Having at length obtained his liberty, he published, after his return, a diary of his captivity, a descriptive history of Africa, and a polyglot coltion of Pater Nosters, among which are several African languages not previously known in Europe,* Very little, however, is known of his own personal acquirements, which are noticeable, perhaps, rather on account of their unusual character, than of their great extent or variety.

Some of the linguists of Holland may claim a higher rank. The well-known Arabic scholar, Erpenius, (Thomas Van Erpen,) was also acquainted with several other Oriental languages, Hebrew, Chaldee, Persian, Turkish, and Ethiopic. His countryman and successor in the chair of Oriental languages at Leyden, James Golius, was hardly less distinguished. Peter Golius, brother of James, who entered the Carmelite Order and spent many years as a missionary in Syria and other parts of the East, became equally celebrated in Rome for his Oriental scholarship. In all these three cases the knowledge of the languages was not a mere knowledge of books, but had been acquired by actual travel and research in the various countries of the East.

John Henry Hottinger, too, a pupil of James Golius at Leyden, and the learned Jesuit, Father Athanasius Kircher, belong also to this period. The latter, who is well known for his varied and extensive attainments in every department of science, was moreover a linguist of no ordinary merit.† He was born at Geyzen, near Fulda, in 1602, and entered

* Mithridates, I., 596.
† Biogr. Univ., Art. Kircher.

the Jesuit society in 1618, when only sixteen years old. No detailed account is given by his biographers (with whom languages were of minor interest,) of the exact extent of his attainments in the department of languages; but they were both diversified and respectable, and in some things he was far beyond the men of his own time. His *Lingua Egyptiaca Restituta* may still be consulted with advantage by the student of Coptic.

Most of these men, however, confined themselves chiefly to one particular department. The first really universal linguist of Germany is the great Ethiopic scholar, Job Ludolf, who was born at Erfurt, in 1624. Early in life he devoted himself to the study of languages; and his extensive travels—first as preceptor to the sons of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, and afterwards as tutor to the children of the Swedish ambassador in Paris—coupled with his unexampled industry,* enabled him, not only to hold a high rank in history and general literature, but also to attain to a success as a linguist which had rarely been equalled before his time. He is said to have been master of twenty-five languages,† but as I have never seen any exact enumeration of them, I am inclined to allow for considerable exaggeration.

There is even more reason to suspect of exaggeration the popular accounts which have come down to us of a self-educated linguist of the same period—a Saxon peasant called Nicholas Schmid, more commonly known as Cüntzel of Rothenacker, from the name of the village where he was born, in 1606. This extraordinary man was the son of a peasant. His youth was entirely neglected. He worked as a common labourer on his father's farm, and, until his sixteenth year, never had learned even the letters of the alphabet. At this age one of the farm-servants taught him to read, greatly to the dissatisfaction of his father, who feared that such studies would withdraw him from his work. Soon afterwards, a relative who was a notary, gave him a few lessons in Latin; and, under the direction of the same relative, he learned the rudiments of Greek, Hebrew, and other languages. During all this time, he continued his daily occupation as a farm-labourer, and had no time for his studies but what he was able to steal from the hours allotted for sleep and for meals; the latter of which he snatched in the most hurried manner, and always with an open

* Even at his meals Ludolf always kept an open book before him.
† Feller's Dict. Biog. VII., p. 622.

book by his side. In this strange way, amid the toils of the field and of the farm-yard, Schmid is said to have acquired a store of knowledge the details of which border upon the marvelous, one of his recorded performances being a translation of the Lord's Prayer into fifty-one languages!*

One of the scholars engaged in the compilation of Walton's Polyglot, Andrew Müller, has left a reputation less marvellous, but more solid. He was born about 1630, at Greiffenhagen in Pomerania. Müller, like Crichton, was a precocious genius. At eighteen he wrote verses freely in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. On the completion of his studies, he became pastor of Königsberg on the Warta; but the duties of that charge soon became distasteful to him, and, after a short trial, he resolved, at the invitation of Castell, to settle in England, and devote himself to literature. He arrived just as Brian Walton was making arrangements for the publication of his celebrated Polyglot Bible, and at once entered earnestly into the scheme. He took up his residence in the house of John Castell in the Strand, where, for ten years, he applied himself unremittingly to study. It is told of him that, in the ardour of study or the indifference of scholastic seclusion, he would not raise his head from his books to look out of the window, on occasion of Charles II.'s triumphal progress at the Restoration! Having received from Bishop Wilkins some information on the subject of Chinese, he conceived a most enthusiastic passion for that language. He obtained some types at Antwerp, and, through the instructions of the celebrated Jesuit, Father Kircher, and other members of the society, he was perhaps the first European scholar who, without actually visiting China, acquired a mastery of its language; as he is certainly one of the first who deserted the track of the old philologers, and attempted the comparative study of languages on principles approaching to those which modern science has made familiar. Soon after the completion of Walton's Polyglot Müller returned to Germany. He was named successively Pastor of Bernau and Provost of Berlin in 1667, but resigned both livings in 1685, and lived thenceforth in retirement at Stettin. He died in 1694. Although a most laborious man and a voluminous writer, Muller's views were visionary and unpractical. He professed to have devised a plan of teaching, so complete, that, by adopting it, a perfect knowledge of Chinese could be

* Biographie Universelle, Vol. XLI., p. 180.

acquired in half a year, and so simple, that it could be applied to the instruction of persons of the most ordinary capacity. Haller states that he spoke no less than twenty languages.

A Burgomaster-linguist is a more singular literary phenomenon. We are so little accustomed to connect that title with any thing above the plodding details of the commerce with which it is inseparably associated, that the name of Nicholas Witzen, Burgomaster of Amsterdam, deserves to be specially commemorated, as an exception to an unliterary class. It was in the pursuit of his vocation as a merchant that Witzen acquired the chief part of the languages with which he was acquainted. He made repeated expeditions to Russia between the years 1666 and 1677, in several of which he penetrated far into the interior of the country, and had opportunities of associating with many of the motley races of that vast empire; Slavonians, Tartars, Cossacks, Samoiedes, and the various Siberian tribes; as well as with natives of Eastern kingdoms not subject to Russia.* Besides inquiries into the geography and natural history of those countries which lie upon the north-eastern frontier of Europe and the contiguous provinces of Asia, Witzen used every effort to glean information regarding their languages. He obtained, in most of these languages, not only versions of the Lord's Prayer, but also vocabularies comprising a considerable number of words; both of which he supplied to his friend and correspondent, Leibnitz, for publication in his *Collectanea Etymologica*.† How far Witzen himself was acquainted with these languages it is difficult to determine; but he is at least entitled to notice as the first collector of materials for this particular branch of the study.

David Wilkins, Chamberlayne's fellow-labourer in the compilation of the Collection of Pater Nosters referred to in a former page, may also deserve a passing notice. The place of his birth, which occurred about 1685, is a matter of some uncertainty. Adelung‡ thinks he was a native of Dantzig; by others he is believed to have been a native of Holland. The best part of his life, however, was spent in England; where, at Cambridge, he took the degree of Doctor of Divinity, in 1717. He was afterwards appointed Librarian of Lambeth

* Adelung's Mithridates, I., 660.

† They are given in the second volume. Witzen's letters to Leibnitz are of the years 1697, 1698, and 1699. Opp. Vol. VI., Part II., pp. 191-206. The specimens of the Pater Noster are in the Collectanea Etymol., ib. 187.

‡ I., 664.

and Archdeacon of Suffolk. His qualifications as Polyglot editor, at the time when he undertook to assist Chamberlayne, appear to have consisted rather in patient industry and general scholarship, than in any extraordinary familiarity with languages; though he afterwards obtained considerable reputation, especially by an edition of the New Testament in Coptic, in 1716.

With the illustrious name of Leibnitz we commence a new era in the science of languages. This extraordinary man, who united in himself all the most varied, and it might seem incompatible, excellencies of other men—a jurist and a divine, a mathematician and a poet, a historian and a philosopher—added to all his other prodigious attainments a most extensive and profound knowledge of languages. It is not, however, on the actual extent of his acquaintance with particular languages (although this too was most remarkable), that his fame as a scientific linguist rests. He was the first to recognize the true nature and objects of linguistic science, and to direct its studies to an object at once eminently practical and profoundly philosophical. It is not alone that, deserting the trivialities of the old etymologists, he laid down the true principles of the great science of comparative philology, and detected its full importance; Leibnitz may claim the further merit of having himself almost created that science, and given it forth, a new Minerva, in its full and perfect development. There is hardly a principle of modern philology the germ of which may not be discovered in his singularly pregnant and suggestive essays and letters; and, what is far more remarkable, he has often, with the instinctive sagacity of original genius, anticipated sometimes by conjecture, sometimes by positive prediction, analogies and results which the investigations of actual explorers have since realized.*

One of the most important practical services rendered by Leibnitz to science, was the organization of academies and other scientific bodies, by which the efforts of individuals might be systematically guided to one common end, and the results of their researches, whether in collecting facts or in

* See several interesting examples in the first of Cardinal Wiseman's Lectures "On the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion," I., p. 25. The two lectures on the Comparative Study of Languages exhaust the whole history of philological science down to the date of their publication. Ample justice is also rendered to Leibnitz's rare philological instinct by Chevalier Bunsen, Christianity and Mankind, III., 44. See also Guhrauer's "Leibnitz: Eine Biographie," II., 129.

developing theories, might, through the collision of many minds, be submitted to the ordeal of careful examination and judicious discussion. It is chiefly to him that science is indebted for the Royal Society of Berlin and the Academy of St. Petersburg. Both of these bodies, although embracing the whole circle of science, have proved most eminent schools of languages; and it is a curious illustration of that profound policy, in pursuance of which we see Russia still availing herself of the service of genius wherever it is to be found, that many of the ablest German linguists of the eighteenth century were, either directly or indirectly, connected with the latter institution.

Gerard Frederic Müller is an early example. He was born, at Herforden in Westphalia, in 1705, and was a pupil of the celebrated Otto Mencken. Mencken, having been invited to become a member of the new academy of St. Petersburg, declined the honour for himself, but recommended his scholar Müller in his stead.* Müller accordingly accompanied the scientific expedition which was sent to Siberia under the elder Gmelin, (also a German,) from 1733 to 1741. On his return, he was appointed keeper of the Imperial Archives, and Historiographer of Russia. Müller does not appear to have given much attention to Oriental languages; but he was more generally familiar with modern languages than most of the scholars of that period.†

Augustus Lewis Schlötzer, another German literary adventurer in the Russian service, and for a time secretary of Müller, was a more generally accomplished linguist. Unlike Müller, he was a skilful Orientalist; and he was versed, moreover, in several of the Slavonic languages with which Müller had neglected to make himself acquainted, before engaging in the compilation of his great collection of Russian Historians. For this he availed himself of the assistance of his secretary Schlötzer. Gottlieb Bayer of Königsberg, one of the earliest among the scholars of Germany, author of the *Museum Sinicum*, also occupied for some years a chair at St. Petersburg; but he is better known by his ferocious controversial writings, than by his philological works. A much more distinguished scholar of modern Germany, almost

* See Denina's La Prusse Litteraire, III., 83.

† He wrote chiefly in Russian. See Meusel's Gelehrte Deutschland, a dry but learned and accurate Dictionary of the living writers of Germany in the end of the eighteenth century, begun by Hamberger in 1783, but continued by Meusel.

entirely unknown in England, is Christian William Buttner. He was born at Wolfenbüttel in 1716, and was destined by his father (an apothecary) for the medical profession; but, although he gave his attention in the first instance to the sciences preparatory to that profession, the real pursuit of his life became philology, and especially in its relation to the great science of ethnography. It was a saying of Cuvier's, that Linnæus and Buttner realised by their united studies the title of Grotius's celebrated work, "De Jure *Naturæ* et *Gentium*;"—Linnæus by his pursuit of *Natural* History assuming the first, and Buttner, by his *ethnological* studies, appropriating the second—as the respective spheres of their operations. In every country which Buttner visited, he acquired not only the general language, but the most minute peculiarities of its provincial dialects. Few literary lives are recorded in history which present such a picture of self-denial and privation voluntarily endured in the cause of learning, as that of Buttner. His library and museum, accumulated from the hoardings of his paltry income, were exceedingly extensive and most valuable. In order to scrape together the means for their gradual purchase, he contented himself during the greater part of his later life with a single meal per day, the cost of which never exceeded a silbergroschen, or somewhat less than three half-pence!* It may be inferred, however, from what has been said, that Buttner's attainments were mainly those of a book-man. In the scanty notices of him which we have gleaned, we do not find that his power of speaking foreign languages was at all what might have been expected from the extent and variety of his book-knowledge. But his services as a scientific philologer were infinitely more important, as well as more permanent, than any such ephemeral faculty. He was the first to observe and to cultivate the true relations of the monosyllabic languages of southern Asia, and to place them at the head of his scheme of the Asiatic and European languages. He was the first to conceive, or at least to carry out, the theory of the geographical distribution of languages; and he may be looked on as the true founder of the science of glossography. He was the first to systematise and to trace the origin and affiliations of the various alphabetical characters; and his researches in the history of the palæography of the Semitic family may be said to have exhausted the subject. Nevertheless, he has himself

* Biogr. Univ., VI., 399.

written very little; but he communicated freely to others the fruits of his researches; and there are few of the philologers of his time who have not confessed their obligations to him. Michaelis, Schlötzer, Gatterer, and almost every other contemporary German scholar of note, have freely acknowledged both the value of his communications and the generous and liberal spirit in which they were imparted.*

John David Michaelis† (1717—91) is so well known in these countries by his contributions to Biblical literature‡ that little can be necessary beyond the mention of his name. His grammar of the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, sufficiently attest his abilities as an Orientalist; and, as regards that particular family of languages, his philological views are generally solid and judicious. But I am unable to discover what were his attainments in modern languages; and to the general science of comparative philology he cannot be said to have rendered any important original contribution.

The Catholic Missionaries of Germany, although of course less numerous than their brethren of Italy and the Spanish Peninsula, have contributed their share to the common stock of linguistic science. Many of the Jesuit Missionaries of Central and Southern America;—for example, Fathers Richter, Fritz, Grebmer, and Widmann—whose papers are the foundation of Humboldt's Essay in the *Mithridates*, were of German origin. Father Dobritzhofer, whose interesting account of the Abipones has been translated into English§, under Southey's advice and superintendence, was a native of Austria; and the learned Sanscrit scholar, Father Paulinus de Sancto Bartholomeo, (although less known under his German name, John Philip Werdin) was an Austrian Carmelite, and served for above fourteen years in the Indian missions of his order.

A German philanthropist of a different class, Count Leopold von Berchtold (1738—1809) the Howard of Germany, deserves to be named, not merely for his devoted services to the cause

* Biog. Univ., p. 402.

† Denina (Prusse Litteraire, III., p. 31) observes that the name of Michaelis would appear to have had the profession of Oriental literature as its peculiar inheritance.

‡ For a complete enumeration of his works see Meusel's Gelehrte Deutschland, II., 563.

§ 3 vols., 8vo., London, 1827.

of humanity throughout the world, but for his remarkable acquirements as a linguist. He spoke fluently eight European languages; * and, what is more rare, wrote and published in the greater number of them, tracts upon the great subject to which he dedicated his life. He died, at a very advanced age, of the plague, and has long been honoured as a martyr in the cause of philanthropy; but he has left no notable work behind him.

Very different the career of the great author of the *Mithridates*, John Christopher Adelung, who lived almost exclusively for learning. He was born in 1734, at Spantekow in Pomerania. In 1759, he was appointed to a professorship at Erfurt; but he exchanged it, after a few years, for a place at Leipsic, where he continued to reside for a long series of years. Although habitually of a gay and cheerful disposition, and a most agreeable member of society, he was one of the most assiduous students upon record, devoting as a rule no less than fourteen hours a day to his literary occupations.† His services to his native language are still gratefully acknowledged by every German etymologist, and his Dictionary, (although since much improved by Voss and Campe,) has been declared as great a boon to Germany, as the united labours of the Academy had been able to offer to France. Adelung's personal reputation as a linguist was exceedingly high, but his fame with posterity must rest on his great work, the *Mithridates*, which I have already briefly described. The very origination of such a work, or at least the undertaking it upon the scale on which he has carried it out, would have made the reputation of an ordinary man. In the touching preface of the first volume, (the only one which Adelung lived to see published,) he describes it as "the youngest and probably the last child of his muse;" and confesses that "he has nurtured, dressed, and cherished it, with all the tenderness which it is commonly the lot of the youngest child to enjoy." ‡ It is indeed a work of extraordinary labour, and, although from the manner in which its materials were supplied, necessarily incomplete and even inaccurate in its details, a work of extraordinary ability. The first volume alone (containing the languages of Asia, and published in 1806,) is exclusively Adelung's. Of the second, only a hundred and fifty pages had been printed when the venerable author died in his seventy-third year. These printed sheets, and the papers which

* Biographie Universelle, LVIII., p. 4.
† Feller, I., 66. See also Bunsen, III., 42.
‡ Vol. I., p. xx.

he had collected for the subsequent volumes, he bequeathed to Dr. Severinus Vater, professor of theology at Königsberg, under whose editorship, with assistance from several friends, (and especially from the lamented William von Humboldt and Frederic Adelung,) the second volume, which comprises the languages of Europe with all their ramifications, appeared in 1809. The third, on the languages of Africa, and of America, (for which last the work is indebted to Humboldt,) appeared, in parts, between 1812 and 1816; and a supplementary volume, containing additions to the earlier portions of the work, by Humboldt, Frederic Adelung, and Vater himself, was published in 1817. It is impossible to overstate the importance and value of this great linguistic repertory. The arrangement of the work is strictly scientific, according to the views then current. The geographical distribution, the origin and history, and the general structural peculiarities of each, not only of the great families, but of the individual languages, and in many cases even of the local dialects, are carefully, though briefly described. The specimen Pater-Noster in each language and dialect, is critically examined, and its vocabulary explained. To each language, too, is prefixed a catalogue of the chief philological or etymological works which treat of its peculiarities; and thus abundant suggestions are supplied for the prosecution of more minute researches into its nature and history. And for the most part, all this is executed with so much simplicity and clearness, with so true a perception of the real points of difficulty in each language, and with so almost instinctive a power of discriminating between those peculiarities in each which require special explanation, and those less abnormal qualities which a philosophical linguist will easily infer from the principles of general grammar, or from a consideration of the common characteristics of the family to which it belongs, that one may learn as much of the real character of a language, in a few hours, from the few suggestive pages the *Mithridates*, as from the tedious and complicated details of its professional grammarians.

Adelung's associate in the *Mithridates* and its continuator, Dr. Severinus Vater, was born at Altenburg, in 1771; he studied at Jena and Halle, in both of which universities he afterwards held appointments as professor; at Jena, as extraordinary Professor of Theology in 1796, and at Halle, as Professor of Oriental Languages in 1800. Thence he was transferred, in 1809, to Königsberg in the capacity of Professor of Theology and Librarian; but he returned, in 1820, to

Halle, where he continued to reside till his death, in 1826. Although Vater was by no means a very scientific linguist,* the importance of his contributions to the study of languages cannot be too highly estimated. Besides the large share which he had in the preparation of the *Mithridates* (the last three volumes of which were edited by him,) he also wrote well on the grammar of the Hebrew, Polish, Russian, and German languages. Nevertheless, his reputation is rather that of a scholar than of a linguist.

A few years after the author of the *Mithridates* appears the celebrated Peter Simon Pallas, to whom we are indebted for the great "Comparative Vocabulary" already described. He was born at Berlin in 1741, and his early studies were mainly directed to natural philosophy, which he seems to have cultivated in all its branches. His reputation as a naturalist procured for him, in 1767, an invitation from Catherine II. of Russia, to exchange a distinguished position which he had obtained at the Hague for a professorship in the Academy of St. Petersburg. His arrival in that capital occurred just at the time of the departure of the celebrated scientific expedition to Siberia for the purpose of observing the transit of Venus; and, as their mission also embraced the geography and natural history of Siberia, Pallas gladly accepted an invitation to accompany them. They set out in June, 1768, and after exploring the vast plains of European Russia, the borders of Calmuck Tartary, and the shores of the Caspian, they crossed the Ural Mountains, examined the celebrated mines of Catherinenberg, proceeded to Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia, and penetrated across the mountains to the Chinese frontier, whence Pallas returned by the route of Astrakan and the Caucasus to St. Petersburg. He reached that city in July, 1774, with broken health, and hair prematurely whitened by sickness and fatigue. He resumed his place in the Academy; and was rewarded by the Empress with many distinctions and lucrative employments, one of which was the charge of instructing the young grand-dukes, Alexander and Constantine. It was during these years that he devoted himself to the compilation of the *Vocabularia Comparativa*, which comprises two hundred and one languages; but, in 1795, he returned to the Crimea, (where he had obtained an extensive gift of territory from the Empress) for the purpose of recruiting his health and pursuing his researches. After a residence there of fifteen years, he

* Bunsen's "Christianity and Mankind," III., p. 44.

returned to Berlin in 1810, where he died in the following year. It will be seen, therefore, that, prodigious as were his acquirements in that department, the study of languages was but a subordinate pursuit of this extraordinary man. His fame is mainly due to his researches in science. It is to him that we owe the reduction of the astronomical observations of the expedition of 1768; and Cuvier gives him the credit of completely renewing the science of geology, and of almost entirely re-constructing that of natural history. It is difficult, nevertheless,* to arrive at an exact conclusion as to the share which he personally took in the compilation of the Vocabulary; and still more so, as to his powers as a speaker of foreign languages; although it is clear that his habits of life as a traveller and scientific explorer, not only facilitated, but even directly necessitated for him, the exercise of that faculty, to a far greater degree than can be supposed in the case of most of the older philologers.

The career of Pallas bears a very remarkable resemblance to that of a more modern scholar, also a native of Berlin, Julius Henry Klaproth. He was the son of the celebrated chemist of that name, and was born in 1783. Although destined by his father to follow his own profession, a chance sight of the collection of Chinese books in the Royal Library at Berlin, irrevocably decided the direction of his studies. With the aid of the imperfect dictionary of Mentzel and Pere Diaz, he succeeded in learning without a master that most difficult language; and, though he complied with his father's desire, so far as to pursue with success the preparatory studies of the medical profession, he never formally embraced it. After a time he gave his undivided attention to Oriental studies; and, in 1802, established, at Dresden, the *Asiatisches Magazin*. Like so many of his countrymen, he accepted service in Russia, at the invitation of Count Potocki, who knew him at Berlin,; and he was a member of the half-scientific, half-political, mission to Pekin, in 1805, under that eminent scholar and diplomatist. He withdrew, however, from the main body of this expedition, in order to be able to pursue his scientific researches more unrestrainedly; and, after traversing eighteen hundred leagues in the space of twenty months, in the course of which he passed in review all the motley races of that inhospitable region, Samoiedes, Finns, Tartars, Monguls, Paskirs, Dzoungars, Tungooses, &c., he returned to St. Peters-

* See preface of the *Vocabularia Comparativa*. Also Biographie Universelle, XXXII., p. 440.

burg, in 1806, with a vast collection of notes on the Chinese, Mantchu, Mongul, and Japanese* languages. With a similar object, he was soon afterwards sent by the Academy, in September, 1807, to collect information on the languages of the Caucasus, a journey of exceeding difficulty and privation, in which he spent nearly three years. On his return to St. Petersburg, he obtained permission to go to Berlin for the purpose of completing the necessary engravings for his work; and he availed himself of this opportunity to withdraw altogether from the Russian service, although with the forfeiture of all his titles and honours. After a brief sojourn in Italy, he fixed his residence in Paris. To him the *Société Asiatique* may be said to owe its origin; and he acted, almost up to his death in 1835, as the chief editor of its journal—the well-known *Journal Asiatique*. In Paris, also, he published his *Asia Polyglotta*, and "New Mithridates." Klaproth, perhaps, does not deserve, in any one of the languages which he cultivated, the character of a very deep scholar; but he was acquainted with a large number: with Chinese, Mongol, Mantchu, and Japanese, also with Sanscrit, Armenian, Persian, and Georgian;† he was of course perfectly familiar with German, Russian, French, and probably with others of the European languages.

The eminent historical successes of Berthold GeorgeNiebuhr, (born at Copenhagen in 1776), have so completely eclipsed the memory of all his other great qualities, that perhaps the reader will not be prepared to find that in the department of languages his attainments were of the highest rank. His father, Carsten Niebuhr, the learned Eastern traveller, had destined him to pursue his own career; but the delicacy of the youth's constitution, and other circumstances, forced his father to abandon the idea, and saved young Niebuhr for the far more important studies to which his own tastes attracted him. His history, both literary and political, is too recent and too well known to require any formal notice. It will be enough for our purpose to transcribe from his life an extremely interesting letter from his father, which bears upon the particular subject of the present inquiry. It is dated December, 1807, when Niebuhr was little more than thirty years

* The Japanese he learned from a shipwrecked native of Japan whom he met at Irkutsch; probably the same mentioned in "Golownin's Narrative."

† Biogr. Univ., LXVIII., 532.

of age. "My son has gone to Memel," writes the elder Niebuhr, "with the commissariat of the army. When he found he should probably have to go to Riga, he began forthwith to learn Russian. Let us just reckon how many languages he knows already. He was only two years old when we came to Meldorf, so that we must consider, 1st, German, as his mother tongue. He learned at school, 2nd, Latin; 3rd, Greek; 4th, Hebrew; and, besides in Meldorf he learned, 5th, Danish; 6th, English; 7th, French; 8th, Italian; but only so far as to be able to read a book in these languages; some books from a vessel wrecked on the coast induced him to learn, 9th, Portuguese; 10, Spanish; of Arabic he did not know much at home, because I had lost my lexicon and could not quickly replace it; in Kiel and Copenhagen he had opportunities of practice in speaking and writing French, English, and Danish; in Copenhagen he learned, 11th, Persian, of Count Ludolph, the Austrian minister, who was born at Constantinople, and whose father was an acquaintance of mine; and 12th, Arabic, he taught himself; in Holland he learned, 13th, Dutch; and again, in Copenhagen, 14th, Swedish, and a little Icelandic; at Memel, 15th, Russian; 16th, Slavonic; 17th, Polish; 18th, Bohemian; and, 19th, Illyrian. With the addition of Low German, this makes in all twenty languages."*

As this letter does not enter into the history of Niebuhr's later studies, I inquired of his friend, the Chevalier Bunsen, whether he had continued to cultivate the faculty thus early developed. I received from him the following interesting statement:—"Niebuhr," he says, "ought not to be ranked among *Linguists*, in contradistinction with *Philologers*. Language had no special interest for him, beyond what it affords in connection with history and literature. His proficiency in languages was, however, very great, in consequence of his early and constant application to history, and his *matchless memory*. I have spoken of both in my *Memoir on Niebuhr*, in the German and English edition of Niebuhr's Letters and Life; it is appended to the 2nd volume of both editions. I think it is somewhere stated how many languages he knew at an early age. What I know is, that besides *Greek* and *Latin*, he learned early to read and write *Arabic; Hebrew* he had also learned, but neglected afterwards; *Russian* and *Slavonic* he learned (to read only,) in the years 1808,1810. He wrote well *English*, *French*, and *Italian*; and read *Spanish*, and

* Life and Letters of Niebuhr, I. p. 27-8.

Portuguese. *Danish* he wrote as well as his mother tongue, *German*, and he understood *Swedish*. In short, he would learn with the greatest ease *any language* which led him to the knowledge of historical truth, when occupied with the subject; but language, as such, had no charm for him."

Among the scholars who assisted Adelung and Vater in the compilation of the *Mithridates*, by far the most distinguished was the illustrious Charles William von Humboldt. He was born at Potsdam, in 1767, and received his preliminary education at Berlin. His university studies were made partly at Göttingen, partly at Jena, where he formed the acquaintance and friendship of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and, above all, of Herder, from whose well-known tastes it is highly probable that Humboldt's mind received the strong philological bias which it exhibited during his life. Unlike most of the scholars who preceded him in this career, however, Humboldt's life was spent amid the bustle and intrigue of diplomatical pursuits. He was sent to Rome as Prussian Minister in 1802, and, from that period until 1819, he was almost uniformly employed in this and similar public services. From his return to Berlin, in 1819, he lived almost entirely for science, till his death, which occurred at Tegel, near Berlin, in 1835. Humboldt is, in truth, the author of that portion of the third volume of the *Mithridates* which treats of the languages of the two continents of America; and, although a great part of its materials were derived from the labours of others—from the memoirs, published and unpublished, of the missionaries, from the works and MSS. of Padre Hervaz, and other similar sources—yet no one can read any single article in the volume without perceiving that Humboldt had made himself thoroughly master of the subject; and that, especially in its bearings upon the general science of philology, or the great question of the unity of languages and its kindred ethnological problems, he had not only exhausted all the learning of his predecessors, but had successfully applied to it all the powers of his own comprehensive and original genius. To the consideration, too, of this numerous family of languages he brought a mind stored with the knowledge of all the other great families both of the East and of the West; and although it is not easy to say what his success in speaking languages may have been, it is impossible to doubt either the variety or the solidity of his attainments both as a scientific and as a practical linguist. But Humboldt's place with posterity must be that of a philologer rather than of a linguist. His Essay on the "Diversity

of the Formation of Human Language, and its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind," published posthumously in 1836, as an Introduction to his Analysis of the Kawi Language, is a work of extraordinary learning and research, as well as of profound and original thought; analysing all the successive varieties of grammatical structure which characterize the several classes of language in their various stages of structural development, from the naked simplicity of Chinese up to the minute and elaborate inflexional variety of the Sanscritic family. M. Bunsen describes this wonderful work as "the *Calculus Sublimis* of linguistic theory," and declares that "it places William von Humboldt's name by the side of that of Leibnitz in universal comparative ethnological philology."*

The school of Humboldt in Germany has supplied a long series of distinguished names to philological literature, beginning with Frederic von Schlegel, (whose Essay "On the Language and Literature of the Hindoos, 1808," opened an entirely new view of the science of comparative philology), and continued, through Schlegel's brother Augustus, Rask, Bopp, Grimm, Lepsius, Pott, Pfizmaier, Hammer-Purgstall (the so-called "Lily of Ten Tongues)", Sauerwein, Diez, Boehtlingk, and the lamented Castrén, down to Bunsen, and his learned fellow-labourers, Max Müller, Paul Boetticher, Aufrecht, and others.† For most of those, as for Schlegel, the Sanscrit family of languages has been the great centre of exploration, or at least the chief standard of comparison; and Bopp, in his wonderful work, the "Comparative Grammar of the Sanscrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, old Slavonic, Gothic, and German Languages,"‡ has almost exhausted this part of the inquiry. Others (still, however, with the same general view) have devoted themselves to other families, as Lepsius to the Egyptian, Rask to the Scythian, Boehthingk to the Tartar,§ Grimm to the Teutonic, Diez to the Romanic,

* "Christianity and Mankind," III., p. 60.

† As a mere linguist I should name Dr. Pruner, a native of Bavaria, but long a resident of Egypt, where he was physician of the late Pasha. M. d'Abbadie states that Dr. Pruner is reputed to speak twelve languages, Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Latin, German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Danish.

‡ This Grammar has appeared in successive sections, commencing in 1833, and only completed in 1852.

§ Klaproth, the great explorer of the Caucasian languages, does not properly belong to Schlegel's school, as he comparatively over-

and Castrén to the Finnic. Others, in fine, as Bunsen in hi most comprehensive work, "Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History applied to Language," (the third volume of his "Christianity and Mankind") have digested the entire subject, and applied the researches of all to the solution of the great problem of the science. Some of those whom I have named rather resembled the ancient heroes of romance and adventure, than the common race of quiet everyday scholars. The journeys of Rask, Klaproth, and Lepsius, were not only full of danger, but often attended with exceeding privation; and Alexander Castrén of Helsingfors was literally a martyr of the science. This enthusiastic student,* although a man of extremely delicate constitution, "left his study, travelled for years alone in his sledge through the snowy deserts of Siberia; coasted along the borders of the Polar Sea; lived for whole winters in caves of ice, or in the smoky huts of greasy Samoiedes; then braved the sand-clouds of Mongolia; passed the Baikal; and returned from the frontiers of China to his duties as Professor at Helsingfors, to die after he had given to the world but a few specimens of his treasures."†

Rask and M. Bunsen, even as linguists, deserve to be more specially commemorated.

The former, who was born in 1787 at Brennekilde, in the island of Funen, traversed, in the course of the adventurous journey already alluded to, the Eastern provinces of Russia, Persia, India, Malacca, and the island of Ceylon, and penetrated into the interior of Africa. In all the countries which he visited he made himself acquainted with the various languages which prevailed; so that besides the many languages of his native Teutonic family, those of the Scandinavian, Finnic, and Sclavonic stock, the principal cultivated European languages, and the learned languages (including those of the Bible), he was also familiar with Sanscrit in all its branches; and is justly described as the first who opened the way to "a real

looks the great principle of Schlegel—the grammatical structure of languages.

* Castrén was an accomplished writer both in his own language and in German, and a poet of much merit. His Swedish version of the old Finnic Saga "Kalevala," is perhaps deserving of notice as having furnished in its metre the model of the new English measure adopted by Longfellow in his recent poem "Hiawatha." Castrén's birth-place is close to Uleaborg, the spot resorted to commonly by travellers who desire to witness the phenomenon of "the Midnight Sun."

† Bunsen, III., p. 274.

grammatical knowledge of Zend."* M. Bunsen's great work exhibits a knowledge of the structural analysis of a prodigious number of languages, from almost every family. As a master of the learned languages, Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, and (though he has cultivated these less), Arabic and Persian, he has few superiors. He speaks and writes with equal facility Latin, German, English, French, and Italian, all with singular elegance and purity; he speaks besides Dutch and Danish; he reads Swedish, Icelandic, and the other old German languages, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romaic; and he has also studied many of the less known languages, as Chinese, Basque, Finnic, and Welsh, together with several of the African and North American languages, but chiefly with a view to their grammatical structure, and without any idea of learning to read them.

Nevertheless, with all the linguistic learning which they undoubtedly possess, neither Humboldt nor the other members of his distinguished school fall properly within the scope of this Memoir. With all of them, even those who were themselves accomplished linguists, the knowledge of languages, (and especially of their vocabularies), is a subordinate object. They have never proposed the study to themselves, for its own sake, but only as an instrument of philosophical inquiry. It might almost be said, indeed, that by the reaction which this school has created against the old system of etymological, and in favour of the structural, comparison of languages, a positive discouragement has been given to the exact or extensive study of their vocabularies. Philologers, as a class, have a decided disposition to look down upon, and even to depreciate, the pursuit of linguists. With the former, the knowledge of the words of a language is a very minor consideration in comparison with its inflexions, and still more its laws of transposition (Lautverschiebung); Professor Schott of Berlin plainly avows that "a limited knowledge of languages is sufficient for settling the general questions as to their common origin;"† and beyond a catalogue of a certain number of words for the purpose of a comparative vocabulary, there is a manifest tendency on the part of many, to regard all further concern about the words of a language as old-fashioned and puerile. It it some consolation to the admirers of the old school to know, that, from time to time, learned philo-

* Bunsen, III., p. 53.
† Ibid, 270.

logers have been roughly taken to task for the presumption with which they have theorized about languages of whose vocabulary they are ignorant; and it is difficult not to regard the unsparing and often very amusing exposures of Professor Schott's blunders which occur in the long controversy that he has had with Boehthingk, Mr. Caldwell's recent strictures* upon the Indian learning of Professor Max Müller, or Stanislaus Julien's still fiercer onslaught on M. Panthier, in the *Journal Asiatique*,† as a sort of retributive offering to the offended Genius of neglected Etymology.

I shall not delay upon the Biblical linguists of Germany as Hug, Jahn, Schott, Windischmann, Vullers, &c., among Catholics, or the rival schools of Rosenmüller, Tholuck, Ewald, Gesenius, Fürst, Beer, De Lagarde, &c. Extensive‡ as is the range of the attainments of these distinguished men in the languages of the Bible, and their literature, this accomplishment has now become so universal among German Biblical scholars, that it has almost ceased to be regarded as a title to distinction. Its very masters are lost in the crowd of eminent men who have grown up on all sides around him.

Among the scholars of modern Hungary there are a few names which deserve to be mentioned. Sajnovitz's work on the common origin of the Magyar and Lapp languages, though written in 1770, long before the science of Comparative Philology had been reduced to its present form, has obtained the praise of much learning and ingenuity. Gyarmathi, who wrote somewhat later on the affinity of the Magyar and Finnic languages (1799) is admitted by M. Bunsen § to "deserve a very high rank among the founders of that science." But neither of these authors can be considered as a linguist. Father Dobrowsky, of whom I shall speak elsewhere, although born in Hungary, cannot properly be considered as a Hungarian. Kazinczy, Kisfaludy, and their followers, have confined themselves almost entirely to the cultivation of their own native language, or at least to the ethnological affinities which it involves.

* In his "Comparative Grammar of the Drâvidian or South-Indian Family of Languages."

† The fiercest of them all is contained not in the Journal, but in a pamphlet which was distributed to members of the Society.

‡ Dr. Paul De Lagarde, for instance, has the reputation of knowing above twenty languages.

§ Christianity and Mankind, III., 271.

I have only discovered one linguist of modern Hungary whom I can consider entitled to a special notice, but the singular and almost mysterious interest which attaches to his name may in some measure compensate for the comparative solitude in which it is found.

I allude to the celebrated Magyar pilgrim and philologer, Csoma de Körös. His name is written in his own language, Körösi Csoma Sandor; but in the works which he has published (all of which are in English), it is given in the above form. He was born of a poor, but noble family, about 1790, at Körös, in Transylvania; and, received a gratuitous education at the College of Nagy-Enyed. The leading idea which engrossed this enthusiastic scholar during life, was the discovery of the original of the Magyar race; in search of which (after preparing himself for about five years, at Göttengin, by the study of medicine and of the Oriental languages,) he set out in 1820, on a pilgrimage to the East, "lightly clad, with a little stick in his hand, as if meditating a country walk, and with but a hundred florins, (about £10), in his pocket." The only report of his progress which was received for years afterwards, informed his friends that he had crossed the Balkan, visited Constantinople, Alexandria, and the Arabic libraries at Cairo; and, after traversing Egypt and Syria, had arrived at Teheran. Here, on hearing a few words of the Tibetan language, he was struck by their resemblance to Magyar; and, in the hope of thus resolving his cherished problem, he crossed Little Bucharia to the desert of Gobi; traversed many of the valleys of the Himalaya; and finally buried himself for four years (1827-1830), in the Buddhist Monastery of Kanam, deeply engaged in the study of Tibetan; four months of which time he spent in a room nine feet square, (without once quitting it), and in a temperature below zero! He quickly discovered his mistake as to the affinity of Tibetan with Magyar; but he pursued his Tibetan studies in the hope of obtaining in the sacred books of Tibet some light upon the origin of his nation; and before his arrival at Calcutta, in 1830, he had written down no less than 40,000 words in that language. He had hardly reached Calcutta when he was struck down by the mortifying discovery that the Tibetan books to which he had devoted so many precious years were but translations from the Sanscrit! From 1830 he resided for several years chiefly at Calcutta, engaged in the study of Sanscrit and other languages, and employed in various literary services by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He published in

1834 a Tibetan and English Dictionary, and contributed many interesting papers to the Asiatic Journal, and the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society. In 1842, he set out afresh upon the great pilgrimage which he had made the object of his life; and, having reached Dharjeeling on his way to Sikam in Tibet, he was seized by a sudden illness, which, as he refused to take medicine, rapidly carried him off. This strange, though highly gifted man, had studied in the course of his adventurous life, seventeen or eighteen languages, in several of which he was a proficient.*

The career of this enthusiastic Magyar resembles in many respects that of Castrén, the Danish philologer; and in nothing more than in the devotedness with which each of them applied himself to the investigation of the origin of his native language and to the discovery of the ethnological affinities of his race.

§VI. LINGUISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The names with which the catalogue of Italian and that of Spanish linguists open, find a worthy companion in the first name among the linguists of Britain.

With others the study of languages, or of kindred sciences, formed almost the business of life. But it was not so with the wonder of his own and of all succeeding generations—the "Admirable Crichton"; who, notwithstanding the universality of his reputation, became almost equally eminent in each particular study, as any of those who devoted all their powers to that single pursuit.

James Crichton was born in 1561, in Scotland. The precise place of his birth is uncertain, but he was the son of Robert Crichton of Eliock, Lord Advocate of James VI. He was educated at St. Andrew's. The chief theatres of his attainments, however, were France and Italy. There is not an accomplishment which he did not possess in its greatest perfection—from the most abstruse departments of scholarship, philosophy, and divinity, down to the mere physical gifts and graces of the musician, the athlete, the swordsman, and the cavalier. His memory was a prodigy both of quickness and of tenacity. He could repeat verbatim, after a single hearing, the longest and most involved discourse.† Many of the details which are told

* Knight's Cyclopædia of Biography, I. 450-3.

† Cancellieri, Sugli Uomini di gran Memoria, e sugli Uomini smemorati, p. 50-1.

of him are doubtless exaggerated and perhaps legendary; but Mr. Patrick Frazer Tytler* has shown that the substance of his history, prodigious as it seems, is perfectly reliable. As regards the particular subject of our present inquiry, one account states that, when he was but sixteen years old, he spoke ten languages. Another informs us that, at the age of twenty, the number of languages of which he was master exactly equalled the number of his years. But the most tangible data which we possess are drawn from his celebrated thesis in the University of Paris, in which he undertook to dispute in any of twelve languages—Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, English, German, Flemish, and Slavonic. I am inclined to believe that Crichton's acquirements extended at least so far as this. It might seem that a vague challenge to dispute in any one of a number of foreign tongues was an empty and unsubstantial boast, and a mere exhibition of vanity, perfectly safe from the danger of exposure. But it is clear that Crichton's challenge was not so unpractical as this. He not only specified the languages of his challenge, but there is hardly one of those that he selected which was not represented in the University of Paris at the time, not only sufficiently to test the proficiency of the daring disputant, but to secure his ignominious exposure, if there were grounds to suspect him of charlatanism or imposture. Unhappily, however, the promise of a youth so brilliant was cut short by an early death, in 1583, at the age of twenty-two years. Nor did Crichton leave behind him any work by which posterity might test the reality of his acquirements, except a few Latin verses printed by his friend, Aldus Manutius, on whose generous patronage, with all his accomplishments, he had been dependent for the means of subsistence during one of the most brilliant periods of his career.

A few years Crichton's senior in point of time, although, from the precociousness of Crichton's genius, his junior in reputation, was Lancelot Andrews, Bishop of Winchester. He was born in London in 1555, and, after a distinguished career in the university, rose, through a long course of ecclesiastical preferments, to the see of Winchester. Beyond the general praises of his scholarship in which all his biographers indulge, few particulars are preserved respecting his attainments. Among his contemporaries he was regarded as a prodigy.

* Life of James Crichton of Cluny, commonly called "the Admirable Crichton." Edinburgh, 1819.

Wanley says* that "some thought he might almost have served as interpreter-general at the confusion of tongues;" and even the more prosaic Chalmers attributes to him a profound knowledge of the "chief Oriental tongues, Greek, Latin, and many modern languages."†

John Gregory, who was born at Agmondesham in Buckinghamshire, in the year 1607, would probably have far surpassed Andrews as a linguist, had he not been cut off prematurely before he had completed his thirtieth year. He was a youth of unexampled industry and perseverance, devoting sixteen hours of the twenty-four to his favourite studies. Even at the early age at which he died he had mastered not only the Oriental and classical languages, but also French, Italian, and Spanish, and, what was far more remarkable in his day, his ancestral Anglo-Saxon. But he died in the very blossom of his promise, in 1646.

These, however, must be regarded as exceptional cases The study of languages, it must be confessed, occupied at this period but little of public attention in England. It holds a very subordinate place in the great scheme of Bacon's "Advancement of Learning." In the model Republic of his "New Atlantis" only four languages appear, "ancient Hebrew, ancient Greek, good Latin of the School, and Spanish."‡ Gregory's contemporaries, the brothers John and Thomas Greaves, though both distinguished Persian and Arabic scholars, never made a name in other languages. Notwithstanding the praise which Clarendon bestows on Selden's "stupendous learning in all kinds and *in all languages*,"§ it is certain that the range of his languages was very limited. So, also, what Hallam says of Hugh Broughton as a man "deep in Jewish erudition,"‖ must be understood rather of the literature than of the languages of the East; and although Hugh Broughton's namesake, Richard, (one of the missionary priests in England in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and an antiquarian of considerable merit, mentioned by Dodd¶) was a learned Hebraist, there is no evidence of his having gone farther in these studies.

* *Wonders of the Little World*, p. 286.
† II., p. 223.
‡ "New Atlantis." Bacon's Works, II., 84.
§ Life of Edward Lord Clarendon, I., p. 35.
‖ Literary History, II., 85.
¶ Church History, III., 87.

Indeed, strange as it may at first sight appear, the first epoch in English history really prolific in eminent scholars is the stormy period of the great Civil War. It is not a little remarkable that the most creditable fruit of English scholarship, Walton's Polyglot Bible, was matured, if not brought to light, under the Republic.

The men who were engaged in this work, however, were, for the most part, merely book-scholars. Edmund Castell, born at Halley, in Cambridgeshire, in 1606, author of the Heptaglot Lexicon, which formed the companion or supplement of Walton's Bible, is admitted to have been one of the most profound Orientalists of his day. This Lexicon comprises seven Oriental languages, Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Persian; and, if we add to these the classical languages, we shall find Castell's attainments to have been little inferior to those of any linguist before his time; even without reckoning whatever modern languages he may be supposed to have known. Castell, nevertheless, is one of the most painful examples of neglected scholarship in all literary history. Disraeli truly says that he more than devoted his life to his Lexicon Heptaglotton * His own Appeal to Charles the Second, if less noble and dignified than Johnson's celebrated preface to the Dictionary, is yet one of the most touching documents on record. He laments the "seventeen years during which he devoted sixteen or eighteen hours a day to his labour. He declares that he had expended his whole inheritance (above twelve thousand pounds), upon the work; and that he spent his health and eyesight as well as his fortune, upon a thankless task." The copies of his Lexicon remained unsold upon his hands; and, out of the whole five hundred copies which he left at his death, hardly one complete copy escaped destruction by damp and vermin. "The whole load of learned rags sold for seven pounds!"†

I cannot find that either Castell or his friend (though by no means his equal as a linguist), Brian Walton possessed any remarkable faculty in speaking even the languages with which they were most familiar.

Another of Walton's associates in the compilation of the Polyglot, as well as in other learned undertakings, Edward Pocock (born at Oxford in 1604,) appears to have given more attention to the accomplishment of speaking foreign languages.

* Disraeli's Miscellanies, p. 131.
† Ibid.

In addition to Latin, Greek, French, and probably Italian, he was well versed in Hebrew, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic. During a residence of six years at Aleppo, as British chaplain, (1600-6), he had the advantage of receiving instructions from a native doctor, in the language and literature of Arabia; and he engaged an Arab servant for the sole purpose of enjoying the opportunity of speaking the language.* In a second journey to the East, undertaken a few years later, under the patronage of Laud, he extended his acquaintance with these languages. Two of Pocock's sons, Edward and Thomas, attained a certain eminence in the same pursuit; but neither of them can be said to have approached the fame of their father.

The mention of Arabian literature suggests the distinguished names of Simon Ockley, the earliest English historian of Mahometanism, and of George Sale, the first English translator of its sacred book. Both were in their time Orientalists of high character; but both of them appear to have applied chiefly to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, rather than to the Biblical languages Both, too, may be cited among the examples of unsuccessful scholarship. It was in a debtor's prison at Cambridge that Ockley found leisure for the completion of his great History of the Saracens; and it is told of the learned translator of the Koran, that too often, when he quitted his studies, he wanted a change of linen, and frequently wandered in the streets in search of some compassionate friend who might supply him with the meal of the day !†

Another scholar of high repute at the same period, is Samuel Clarke. He was born at Brackley, in Northamptonshire, in 1623, and was a student at Merton College, Oxford, when the parliamentary commission undertook the reform of the University. The general report of the period represents him as a very profound and accomplished linguist; but the only direct evidence which remains of the extent of his powers, is the fact that he assisted Walton in the preparation of his Polyglot Bible, and also Castell in the composition of his Heptaglot Lexicon. He died in 1669.

Early in the same century was born John Wilkins, another linguist of some pretensions. Perhaps, however, he is better known by the efforts which he made to recommend that ideal project for a Universal Language which has occupied the thoughts of so many learned enthusiasts since his time, than by his own positive and practical attainments; although he published a Col-

* Rose's Biographical Dictionary, XI., 166.
† Disraeli's Miscellanies, p. 131.

lection of Pater Nosters which possesses no inconsiderable philological merit. He was born in 1614, at Fawsley, in Northamptonshire; and at the early age of thirteen, he was admitted a scholar of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1634. In the contest between the Crown and the Parliament, Wilkins became a warm partisan of the latter. He was named Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, by the parliamentary commission in 1648. Some years later, in 1656, he married Robina, sister of the Protector, and widow of Peter French; the Protector having granted him a dispensation from the statute which requires celibacy, as one of the conditions of the tenure of his Wardenship. In 1659, Richard Cromwell promoted him to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge; from which, however, he was dispossessed at the Restoration. But his reputation for scholarship, seemingly through the influence of Buckingham,* outweighed his political demerits; and he was named successively Dean of Ripon and Bishop of Chester, in which latter dignity he died in 1670.

The unhappy deistical writer, John Toland, born in the County Donegal, in Ireland, in 1669, was one of the most skilful linguists of his day. His birth was probably illegitimate, and he was baptized by the strange name of James Junius,† which the ridicule of his schoolfellows caused him to change for that by which he is now known. During his early youth, he was a member of the Catholic religion; but his daring

* Wilkins was an eminent mathematician, and one of the first members of the Royal Society. But his reputation as a humourist was his chief recommendation to Buckingham. His character in many respects resembled that of Swift. One of his witticisms is worth recording. After the first appearance of his well-known Voyage to the Moon ["Discovery of a New World, with a Discourse concerning the Possibility of a Voyage thither"], the eccentric Duchess of Newcastle jestingly remarked to him that the only defect in his account was that it omitted to tell where the voyagers would find lodging and accommodation by the way. "That need present no difficulty to your Grace," said Wilkins; "you have built so many *castles in the air* that *you* cannot be at any loss for accommodation on the journey."

† He published the "Pantheisticon," the most profane of all his works, under this pseudonym. I regret to see that an elaborate attempt to recall this long-forgotten book into notice, is made by Dr. Hermann Hettner, in his "Geschichte der Englischen Literatur von 1660 bis 1770," the first volume of which has just been published at Leipsic (1856). Dr. Hettner has even been at the pains to translate largely from its worst profanities.

and sceptical mind early threw off the salutary restraints which that creed imposes, although, like Gibbon, only to abandon Christianity itself in abandoning Catholicity. His eventful and erratic career does not fall within the scope of this notice, and I will only mention that in the singular epitaph, which he composed for his own tomb, he speaks of himself as "*linguarum plus decem sciens.*" In several of these ten languages, as he states in his memorial to the Earl of Oxford,* he spoke and wrote with as much fluency as in English. Toland died at Putney, in 1722.

From this period the same great blank occurs in the history of English scholarship, which we have observed in almost all the contemporary literatures of Europe. Still a few names may be gleaned from the general obscurity.† It is true that what many persons may deem the most notable publication of the time, Chamberlayne's Collection of Pater Nosters, (1715), was rather a literary curiosity than a work of genuine scholarship. But there are other higher, though less known, names.

The once notorious "Orator Henley," whom the Dunciad has immortalized as the

"Preacher at once, and Zany of his age,"

was unquestionably a linguist of great acquirements. His "Complete Linguist," consisting of grammars of ten languages, was published when he was but twenty-five years old; and throughout his entire career, eccentric as it was, he appears to have persevered in the same studies. John Henley was born at Melton Mowbray, in 1692, and graduated in the University of Cambridge. He took orders, and obtained some notoriety as a preacher; but his great theatre of display was his so-called "Oratory," where he delivered orations or lectures on a variety of topics, religious, political, humorous, and even profane. It was on one of these occasions that he drew together a large congregation of shoemakers, by the promise of showing them "the best, newest, and most expeditious way of making shoes," which he proceeded to illustrate by holding out a boot and *cutting off the leg part!* Henley died in 1756.‡

* Disraeli's Miscellanies, p. 110.

† Among the crowd of bubble companies which arose about the time of the Revolution, was the "Royal Academies Company," which professed to have engaged the best masters in every department of knowledge, and issued 20,000 tickets at twenty shillings each. The fortunate holders were to be taught at the charge of the company! Among the subjects of instruction languages held a high place; and the scheme of education comprised Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Spanish! See Macaulay's History of England, IV., 307.

‡ Disraeli has a curious chapter on Henley, *Miscellanies*, pp. 73-8.

What Henley was in the learned languages, the distinguished statesman Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl of Granville, was in the modern. With all his brilliant qualities as a debater, and all his great capacity for public affairs, Carteret combined the learning and the accomplishments of a finished scholar. Swift said of him that "he carried away from Oxford more Greek, Latin, and philosophy, than became a person of his rank." He spoke and wrote French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and even Swedish; and one of the first causes of the jealousy with which Walpole regarded him, was the volubility with which he was able to hold converse in German with their common master, George the First.

But Henley and Carteret stand almost alone among the English scholars of the early half of the seventeenth century; and the first steady impulse which the study of languages received in England, may be chiefly traced to the attractions of the honourable and emolumentary service of the East India Company. What the diplomatic ambition of France in the Levant effected among the scholars of that country, the commercial enterprise of the merchant princess of England achieved in her Indian territory; and the splendid rewards held out to practical Oriental scholarship, gave an impulse to the study of Eastern languages on a more liberal and comprehensive scale.* It is in great part to this, that we are indebted for the splendid successes of Sir William Jones, of Marsden, of Colebrooke, of Craufurd, of Lumsden, of Leyden, and still more recently, of Colonel Vans Kennedy.

The first of these, William Jones, was the son of a schoolmaster, and was born in London, in 1741. He was educated at Harrow, where he exhibited an early taste for languages,† and was especially distinguished in Greek and Latin metrical composition. In 1764, he entered the University of Oxford, where he learned Arabic from a Syrian whose acquaintance he

* A plan for the promotion of Oriental studies, under the patronage of the Company, formed one of the many magnificent schemes of Warren Hastings, himself no mean linguist. Hastings consulted Johnson on the subject; and it is observed as an evidence of his extraordinary coolness and self-possession, that his letter, acknowledging Johnson's present of Sir W. Jones's Persian Grammar, was written in the midst of the excitement of one of the most eventful days in his chequered life. See Croker's Boswell's Life of Johnson. VIII., 38-42, and Macaulay's Essays, p. 593.

† Even during an attack of ophthalmia he did not relax in his application to study, but used to get some of his schoolfellows to read for him while he was himself disabled from reading.

chanced to form. To this he soon after added Persian; and in 1770, he performed the very unusal feat of translating the history of Nadir Shah into French. In the following year he published his Persian Grammar, which took the general public as much by surprise, by the beauty and eloquence of the poetical translations which accompanied the copious examples that illustrated it, as it excited the admiration of scholars by the simplicity and practical good sense of its technical details. He soon afterwards applied himself to the language and literature of China; which, however, he never made a profound study, as about this time (1770), feeling the precariousness of a purely literary profession, he took steps to have himself called to the English bar, and for the following twelve years devoted himself with all his characteristic energy, and with marked success, to its laborious and engrossing duties. During the same period he endeavoured unsuccessfully to obtain a seat in Parliament; but in 1783, he accepted the appointment of Judge in the supreme court at Calcutta, and repaired to India in the same year. His attention to the duties of his office, is said to have been most earnest and exemplary. But, in the intervals of duty, he travelled over a great part of India; mixed eagerly in native society; and had acquired a familiarity with the history, antiquities, religions, science, and laws of India, such as had never before been attained by any European scholar, when, unhappily for the science to which he was so thoroughly devoted, he was out off prematurely in the year 1794, at the early age of forty-seven. During a life thus laborious, and in great part spent in pursuits utterly uncongenial with linguistic studies, Sir William Jones had nevertheless amassed a store of languages which had seldom, perhaps never, been equalled before his time. Fortunately too, unlike most of the linguists whom we have been enumerating, he himself left an autograph record of these studies, which Lord Teignmouth has preserved in his interesting Biography. In this paper, he describes the total number of languages with which he was in any degree acquainted to have been twenty-eight; but he further distributes these into classes according to the degree of his familiarity with each. From this curious memorandum, it appears that he had studied critically *eight* languages, viz:— English, Latin, French, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Sanscrit; *eight* others he had studied less perfectly, but all were intelligible to him with the aid of a Dictionary, viz:— Spanish, Portuguese, German, Runick, Hebrew, Bengali,

Hindi, Turkish; *twelve* others, in fine, he had studied least perfectly; but he considered all these attainable; namely Tibetan, Pali, Palavi, Deri, Russian, Syriac, Ethiopic. Coptic, Welsh, Swedish, Dutch, and Chinese.*

Now, as Lord Teignmouth† describes him as perfectly familiar with Spanish, Portuguese, and German, three languages which he has himself placed on the list of languages, "less critically studied, but intelligible with the aid of a dictionary," it may fairly be believed that this estimate is, to say the least, a sufficiently modest one; and that his acquaintance even with the languages of the third class was by no means superficial, we may infer from another memorandum preserved by Lord Teignmouth from which we find that he had studied the grammars of two at least of the number, namely: Russian and Welsh. His biographer, however, unfortunately enters into no details as to his power of speaking languages; but he is said by the writer of the notice in the *Biographie Universelle* to have spoken eight languages as perfectly as his native English.

In contrast with successes so brilliant as these, the comparatively humble career of the other British Orientalists named in conjunction with Sir William Jones, will appear tame and uninteresting. William Marsden was born in Dublin, 1754; and, after having completed the ordinary classical studies, was sent out to Bencoolen in the island of Sumatra, at the early age of sixteen. The extraordinary facility which he exhibited for acquiring the Malay languages led to his rapid advancement. He was named first under-secretary, and afterwards chief secretary of the Island; and, before his return in 1779, he had accumulated the materials for the exceedingly valuable work on Sumatra which he published in 1782. Marsden held several important appointments after his return,‡ and he employed every interval of his official duties in literary pursuits. He was a thorough master of Sanscrit, and all its kindred languages; but he must be described, nevertheless, rather as a book-learned, than a practical linguist. His Essay on the Polynesian or East Insular languages, tracing their connexion with each other, and their common relations with Sanscrit, is

* Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir William Jones, II., 168.

† II., 168.

‡ He displayed great disinterestedness in the public service by voluntarily relinquishing, several years before his death, (1836) a large pension which he held under the crown.

still a standard source of information on this interesting ethnological question.

Henry Thomas Colebrooke,* well known by his numerous contributions to Oriental literature, especially in the Asiatic Journal, was also an official of the East India Company, whose employment he entered, while still very young, as a civil servant. Colebrooke was well versed, not only in the Indian languages, but also in those of the Hebrew and cognate races; and his early education in France gave him a greater familiarity with French and other modern tongues than is often found to accompany the more profound linguistic studies.

Matthew Lumsden was born in Aberdeenshire in 1777, and went as a mere boy to India, where his brother had an appointment in the service of the Company. Lumsden's knowledge of Hindostani and of Persian led to his being employed first as translator in the criminal court, and afterwards as professor in Fortwilliam College, where he remained till 1820. His skill in Persian and Arabic is attested by several publications upon both, chiefly elementary; but he can hardly be classed with the higher Orientalists, much less with linguists of more universal pretensions.

Lord Cockburn, in the lively section of his amusing "Memorials of his Own Time" which he devotes to the singular and unsteady career of John Leyden, says that M'Intosh, to whom "his wild friend" was clearly a source of great amusement, used to laugh at the affected modesty with which Leyden "professed to know *but seventy* languages."† It is plain that M'Intosh considered this an extreme exaggeration; but there can be no doubt, nevertheless, that Leyden was a very extraordinary linguist. This strange man, whose name will perhaps be remembered by the frequent allusions to it in the early correspondence of Sir Walter Scott, was born of a very humble family at Denholm in 1775. Though his education was of the very lowest order, yet Scott relates that "before he had attained his nineteenth year, he confounded the doctors of Edinburgh by the portentous mass of his acquisitions in almost every department of knowledge."‡ Having failed very signally in the clerical profession, to which he was brought up by his parents, he embraced that of medicine; and, after undergoing a more than ordinary share of the privations and

* 1765—1837.
† Memorials of My Own Time, p. 180.
‡ Lockhart's Life of Scott, I., p. 323.

vicissitudes of literary life such as it then existed, he went to Madras in 1808 in the capacity of assistant surgeon in the East India Company's service. The adoption of this career decided the course of his after studies. He had learned, while yet a mere youth, preparing for the university, Hebrew and Arabic. He afterwards extended his researches into all the chief languages of the East, Sanscrit, Hindustani, and many other minor varieties of the Indian tongues. He was also thorough master of Persian. His career as Professor of Hindustani at Calcutta was more successful than that of any European scholar since Sir William Jones. Having also studied the Malay language, from which he made several translations, he was induced to accompany Lord Minto on the Java expedition in 1811, where he was cut off after a short illness in the same year, too soon, unhappily, to allow of his turning to full account the important materials which he had collected for the comparative study of the Indo-Chinese languages.

The well-known evangelical commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, born in 1760, of very humble parentage, at Magherafelt, in the County of Londonderry, in the north of Ireland, and for a long course of years the most distinguished preacher of the Methodist communion, enjoyed a high reputation among his followers as a linguist; but his studies had been confined almost entirely to the Biblical languages. The same may be said of the Rev. Dr. Barrett, vice-provost of Trinity College, Dublin, who is known to Biblical students as the editor of the Palimpsest MS. of the Gospels, and of the celebrated Codex Montfortianus.

But there is more of curious interest in the career of a very extraordinary individual, Richard Roberts Jones, of Aberdarvan, in Carnarvonshire, who, if not for the extent of his attainments, at least for the exceedingly unfavourable circumstances under which they were acquired, deserves a place among examples of the "pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." A privately printed memoir of this singular character, by Mr. Roscoe, who took much interest in him, and exerted himself warmly in his behalf, contains several most curious particulars regarding his studies and acquirements, as well as his personal habits and appearance. Mr. Roscoe first met him in 1806, and described him to Dr. Parr as "a poor Welsh fisher-lad, as ragged as a colt, and as uncouth as any being that has a semblance of humanity. But beneath such an exterior," he adds, "is a mind cultivated, not only beyond all reasonable expectation,

but beyond all probable conception. In his fishing boat on the coast of Wales, at an age little more than twenty, he has acquired Greek, Hebrew, and Latin; has read the Iliad, Hesiod, Theocritus, &c.; studied the refinements of Greek pronunciation; and examined the connection of that language with Hebrew." An attempt was made to raise him to a position more befitting his acquirements. But his habits were of the rudest and most uncleanly. "He loved to lie on his back in the bottom of a ditch. His uncouth appearance, solitary habits, and perhaps weak intellect, made him an object of ridicule and persecution to the children of the district; and, he often *carried an iron pot on his head* to screen him from the stones and clods which they threw at him. He wore a large filthy wrapper, in the pockets and folds of which he stowed his library; and his face, covered with hair, gave him a strangely uncouth appearance; although the mild and abstracted expression of his features took from it much of its otherwise repulsive character." Mr. Roscoe gives a very curious account of an interview between Dr. Parr and this strange genius, in 1815, in the course of which Jones "exhibited a familiarity with French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee." He described too, for Dr. Parr, his mode of acquiring a new language, which consisted in carefully examining its vocabulary, ascertaining what words in it corresponded with those of any language which he had previously learned, and *having struck such words out of the vocabulary*, proceeding to impress the *remaining* words upon his memory, as being the only ones which were peculiar to the new language which he sought to acquire. It may easily be believed that Jones's irreclaimably uncouth and eccentric habits defeated the efforts made by his friends to place him in a condition more befitting his acquirements. Clothes with which their thoughtfulness might replace his habitual rags, in a few days were sure to present the same filthy and dilapidated appearance. When a bed was provided for him, he chose to sleep not *upon*, but *under* it; and all his habits bespoke at once weakness of mind and indisposition, or perhaps incapacity, to accommodate himself to the ordinary usages of other men.

Dr. Thomas Young, although his fame must rest chiefly upon his brilliant philosophical discoveries, (especially in the Theory of Light), and on his success in deciphering and systematizing the hieroglyphical writing of the Egyptians, as exhibited in the inscriptions of the Rosetta Stone and in the fune-

real papyri, cannot be passed over in a history of eminent British linguists. Young was born at Milverton in Somersetshire, in 1773. His mind was remarkably precocious. He had read the whole Bible twice through, besides other books, before he was four years old. In his seventh year he learnt Latin; and before he left school in his thirteenth year, he added to this Greek, French, and Italian. Soon after his return from school, he mastered Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Persian; and, in all those languages, as well as in his own, his reading (of which his journals have preserved a most minute and accurate record), was so various and so vast, as almost to exceed belief. Having embraced the medical profession, he passed two years in different German Universities, during which time he not only extended his knowledge of learned languages, but also became perfect master of German;—not to speak of various other acquisitions, some of them of a class which are seldom found to accompany scholastic eminence, such as riding two horses at the same time, walking or dancing on the tight rope, and various other feats of harlequinade! Of his skill in the ancient Egyptian language, as well as its more modern forms, in which he rivalled, and as his English biographer, Dr. Peacock, seeks to show,* surpassed, Champollion and Lepsius, it is unnecessary to speak: and it is highly probable that, having learned Italian while a mere youth,† he also made himself acquainted with Spanish, and perhaps Portuguese.

Dr. Pritchard, who may be regarded as the founder of the English school of ethnography, can hardly, notwithstanding, be strictly called a linguist. If we except the Celtic languages, and Greek, Latin, and German, most of his learning regarding the rest is taken at second-hand from Adelung and others. Nevertheless, the linguistic section of his "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," is a work of very great value. M. Bunsen pronounces it "the best of its kind; infinitely superior, as a whole, to Adelung's *Mithridates*;‡ and Cardinal Wiseman, in his masterly lecture "On the Natural History of the Human race," not only gives Pritchard the credit of being "almost the first who attempted to connect ethnography with philology," but even goes so far as to say

* Life of Thomas Young, M.D. By George Peacock, D.D. London, 1855.

† See an interesting memoir in the National Review, II., 69—97.

‡ Christianity and Mankind, III., 48.

that it will henceforth "be difficult for any one to treat of this theme without being indebted to Dr. Pritchard for a great portion of his materials."*

Of the school of living British linguists I shall not be expected to speak at much length; but there are a few names so familiar to the scholars of every country that it would be unpardonable to pass them over entirely without notice.

The work just quoted, from the very time of its publication in 1836, established the reputation of Dr. (now Cardinal) Wiseman, still a very young writer, as a philologist of the first rank. His latest writings show that, through all the engrossing duties in which he has since been engaged, he has continued to cultivate the science of philology.† The Cardinal is, moreover, a most accomplished linguist. Besides the ordinary learned languages, he is master not only of Hebrew and Chaldee, but also of Syriac (of his scholarship in which his *Horæ Syriacæ* is a most honourable testimony), Arabic, Persian, and Sanscrit. In modern languages he has few superiors. He speaks with fluency and elegance French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese; and in most of these languages he has frequently preached or lectured extempore, or with little preparation.

The interesting discoveries of Colonel Rawlinson and of Dr. Hincks, and Dr. Cureton's very important Syriac publications, have associated their names with the linguistic as well as the antiquarian memories of this age. Nor are there many English Orientalists whose foreign reputation is so high as that of Mr. Lane. But I am unable to speak of the attainments of any of these gentlemen in the other families of language.

By far the most noticeable names in the list of living linguists of British race are those of Sir John Bowring, now Governor at Hong-Kong, Professor Lee of Cambridge, and the American ex-blacksmith, Elihu Burritt. All three, beyond their several degrees of personal merit, possess a common claim to admiration, as being almost entirely self-educated. John (now Sir John) Bowring, as I learn from a Memoir published about three years since,‡ before he had attained his eighteenth year, had learned Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Dutch. He is said to have since added to his

* Lectures on Science and Revealed Religion, I., 180.

† See especially an exceedingly learned and interesting article in the Dublin Review, Vol. XXXIX., pp. 199-244, on Dr. Donaldson's *Jashar*.

‡ Illustrated London News, Feb. 10, 1856.

store almost every language of Europe;—Russian, Servian, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Slovakian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Lettish, Finnish, and even Basque; and he is further described as familiar with all the provincial varieties of each; for instance, of the various offshoots of German, and of the several dialects of Spanish which prevail in Catalonia, Valencia and Galicia. Dr. Bowring's later career brought him into familiarity with Arabic and Turkish; and his still more recent successes in China and in Siam and its dependencies are equally remarkable. It is not so easy to offer an opinion as to the degree of Sir John Bowring's acquaintance with each of the languages which are ascribed to him. His interesting poetical translations from Russian, Servian, Bohemian, and other languages of Europe, are rather a test of elegant literary tastes than of exact linguistic attainments; nor am I aware to what more direct ordeal his various attainments have been subjected. It were to be wished that the Memoir from which these particulars are derived had entered more into detail upon this part of the subject. But, even making every allowance for possible exaggeration, it seems impossible to doubt the claim of Sir John Bowring to a place in the very highest rank of modern linguists.

Dr. Samuel Lee is perhaps even a still more extraordinary example of self-education. He was born in the very humblest rank in the village of Longnor in Shropshire, and, after having spent a short time in the poor-school of his native village, commenced life as a carpenter's apprentice, when he was but twelve years old. In the few intervals of leisure which this laborious occupation permitted, Mr. Jerdan states* that, without the least assistance from masters, he taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee; having contrived, from the hoardings of his scanty wages, to procure a few elementary books in these and other languages. On his marriage, however, he was forced to sell the little library which he had accumulated, in order to provide for the new wants with which he found himself encompassed: and for a time his struggle after learning was suspended; but his extraordinary attainments having begun to attract notice, he was relieved from the uncongenial occupation which he had hitherto followed, and appointed master of a school at Shrewsbury. In the more favourable position which he had thus obtained, he soon ex-

* See a memoir of Dr. Samuel Lee in Jerdan's "Portrait Gallery," Vol. V.

tended his reading to Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani. In 1813 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where it is worthy of note that he distinguished himself no less in science than in languages, and took his degree with much credit. He was afterwards appointed superintendent of the Oriental press of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for which body he has not only edited the Arabic, Persian, Coptic, Hindustani, Malay, and other versions of the Bible, but has also translated, or superintended the translation, of many tracts in these various languages. When Mr. Wheaton, an American traveller, (brother of the well-known American jurist of that name) visited Professor Lee, he found him acquainted with no less than "sixteen languages, in most of which he was able to write."* Neither this writer, however, nor Mr. Jerdan, informs us as to the extent of Dr. Lee's attainments in speaking foreign languages.

The list of linguists of the British race may be closed not unworthily with the still more remarkable name of Elihu Burritt, who, though born in America (in 1811,) is descended of an English family, settled in Connecticut for the last two centuries. The circumstances of Burritt's father, who was a shoemaker, were so narrow, that the education of Elihu, the youngest of five sons, was entirely neglected. When his father died, Elihu, then above fifteen years old, had spent but three months at school; and, being altogether dependent on his own exertions for support, he was obliged to bind himself as an apprentice to the trade of blacksmith. Fortunately, however, an elder brother who was a schoolmaster, settled in the same town before the term of Elihu's apprenticeship expired; and as the latter had carefully devoted each spare moment of his laborious life to reading every book that came within his reach, he gladly availed himself, as soon as he became his own master, of his brother's offer to take him as a pupil for half a year, which was all the time he could hope to spare from his craft. During that time, brief as it was, Elihu "became well versed in mathematics, went through Virgil in the original, and read several French books." Having thus laid the foundation, he returned to his trade, resolved to labour till he should have acquired the means of completing the work; and, in the strong passion for knowledge which devoured him, he actually engaged himself to do the work of

* Journal of a Residence in London. By Nathaniel Wheaton, A.M., p. 85.

two men, in order that, by receiving double wages, he might more quickly realize the desired independence. Yet, even while he was thus doubly tasked, and while his daily hours of labour were no less than fourteen, he contrived to give some time in the mornings and evenings to Latin, French, and Spanish; and he actually procured a small "Greek grammar, which would just *lie in the crown of his hat,* and used to carry it with him to read during his work—the casting of brass cow bells, a task which required no small amount of attention!"

With the little store which he thus toilfully accumulated, he betook himself to New Haven, the seat of Hale College, although without a hope of being able to avail himself of its literary advantages. Here too he worked almost unaided. He took lodgings at an inn frequented by the students, though too poor to enter the university; and in the course of a few months, by unremitting study, he read through the whole Iliad in Greek, and had made considerable progress in Italian and German, besides extending his knowledge of Spanish and French. Having obtained, soon afterwards, a commercial appointment, he was partially released, for a space, from the mechanical drudgery in which he was so long engaged; and, as he was thus enabled to devote a little more time to his favourite studies, he contrived to learn Hebrew, and made his first advance towards a regular course of Oriental reading. But this interval of rest was a brief one; after a very mortifying failure, he was at last compelled to return once more to the anvil, as his only sure resource against poverty. Still, nevertheless, he toiled on in his enthusiastic struggle for knowledge. Even while engaged in this painful drudgery, "every moment," says Mrs. Howitt,* "which he could steal out of the four-and-twenty hours was devoted to study; he rose early in the winter mornings, and, while the mistress of the house was preparing breakfast by lamplight, he would stand by the mantel-piece, with his Hebrew Bible on the shelf, and his lexicon in his hand, thus studying while he ate; the same method was pursued at the other meals; mental and bodily food being taken in together. This severe labour of mind, as might be expected, produced serious effects on his health; he suffered much from headaches, the characteristic remedy for which were two or three additional hours of hard forging, and a little less study."

An extract from his own weekly Diary, which Mrs. Howitt

* People's Journal, Vol. I., p. 244.

has preserved, tells the story of his struggle still more touchingly:—"*Monday*, June 18, headache; forty pages Cuvier's Theory of the Earth, sixty-four pages French, eleven hours forging. *Tuesday*, sixty-five lines of Hebrew, thirty pages of French, ten pages Cuvier's Theory, eight lines Syriac, ten ditto Danish, ten ditto Bohemian, nine ditto Polish, fifteen names of stars, ten hours forging. *Wednesday*, twenty-five lines Hebrew, fifty pages of astronomy, eleven hours forging. *Thursday*, fifty-five lines Hebrew, eight ditto Syriac, eleven hours forging. *Friday*, unwell; twelve hours forging. *Saturday*, unwell; fifty pages Natural Philosophy, ten hours forging. *Sunday*, lesson for Bible class."

Through these and many similar difficulties, has this extraordinary man found his way to eminence. Without attempting to chronicle the stages of his progress, it will be enough to state that a writer of last year describes him as at present acquainted with eighteen languages, besides his native English, viz:—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Samaritan, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Ethiopic, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Danish, Irelandic, Esthonian, Bohemian, and Polish.* He is author of several works, and was for some time Editor of a Journal entitled "The Christian Citizen."

As in the case of Dr. Lee, no attempt is made, in either of the biographies of Burritt which I have consulted, to define with exactness the degree of his knowledge of each among the various languages which he has learned; but if his proficiency in them be at all considerable, his position among linguists must be admitted to be of the very highest; and as he is still only in his forty-sixth year, it would be difficult to predict what may be the limit of his future successes.

§ VII. LINGUISTS OF THE SLAVONIC RACE.

The extraordinary capacity of the Slavonic races for the acquisition of foreign languages, has long been a subject of observation, and of wonder. In every educated foreign circle Russians and Poles may be met, whom it is impossible to distinguish, by their language, or even by their accent, from the natives of the country: and this accomplishment is frequently found to embrace the entire range of the polite languages of Europe. In the higher native Russian society, it is rare to meet one who does not speak several languages, besides his

* Knight's Cyclopædia of Biography, art. Burritt.

own. Every candidate for public office in Russia, especially in connexion with foreign affairs, must be master of at least four languages, French, German, English, and Italian; and in the Eastern governments of the empire, are constantly to be found employés, who, to the ordinary stock of European languages, add an equal number of the dialects of the Asiatic races subject to the Czar.

In most cases, however, this facility in the use of foreign languages enjoyed by the natives of Russia and Poland, is chiefly conversational, and acquired rather by practice than by study; and, among the numbers who, during the last three centuries, must be presumed to have possessed this gift in an eminent degree, very few appear to have acquired a permanent reputation as scholars in the higher sense of the name.

Unfortunately, too, even were it otherwise, the materials for a history of Russian linguists are extremely scanty. Not one of those who have written upon Slavonic Literature, appears to have adverted to this as a distinct branch of scholarship; Slavonic scholars, too, have met but imperfect justice from the writers on general biography; and thus, especially for one to whom the native sources of information are inaccessible, the rare allusions which can be gleaned from the general history of Slavonic literature supply but an uncertain and imperfect guide,* even did opportunities present themselves for pursuing the inquiry.

It would be unpardonable, nevertheless, to pass the subject over in silence; and I can only renew in especial reference to this part of the memoir, the claim for indulgence with which I entered upon this Essay.

Christianity, and with it the first seeds of civilization, reached Russia from Constantinople; and it is not unlikely that the friendly and frequent intercourse which subsisted between the two courts under the first Christian Dukes of Muscovy, Vladimir and Jaroslav, may have led to a considerable interchange of language between the members of the two nations. The many foreign alliances, too, with Constantinople, Germany, Hungary, France, England, Norway, and Poland, which were

* I must here acknowledge my especial obligations to Mr. Watts; not alone for the facilities kindly afforded to me in consulting books in the British Museum Library, but for the valuable assistance in discovering the best sources of information which his extensive acquaintance with Slavonic literature enabled him to render to me in the inquiry.

formed by the children of Jaroslav, may, perhaps, have tended to familiarize his subjects, or at least his court, with some of the languages of Southern and Western Europe. But no record of this—the one bright period in early Russian history—has been preserved, from which any particulars can be gleaned.

The division of Jaroslav's dominions between his sons at his death, (in 1054,) plunged the Russian nation into a series of civil wars and into the barbarism to which such wars lead, from which it did not begin to emerge till the sixteenth century; and, although a few translations (chiefly theological), from Greek and Latin, were made during this period, yet, from the interruption of all intercourse with foreign countries, it may be presumed that (with the exception, perhaps, of a few enterprising individuals, like the merchant Nikitin,* who, in the fifteenth century, traversed the entire East, and penetrated as far as Tibet,) the natives of an empire so completely isolated concerned themselves little about any language beyond their own.

Macarius, who was Metropolitan of Moscow in the middle of the sixteenth century, did something to promote the introduction of foreign letters into Russia,† and many translations, not only from the Greek and Latin fathers, but also from the classical writers, were made under his direction. A still greater impulse must have been given to this particular branch of study by the new policy introduced by the Czar Boris Feodorowitsch Godounoff, who not only invited learned foreigners to his court, but sent eighteen young nobles of Russia to foreign countries to study their arts, their literature and their languages.‡

The results of this more liberal policy, however, had hardly begun to be felt, when the troubles which followed the well-known revolution of Demetrius the Impostor, revived for a time the worst forms of barbarism in the Empire.

The elevation (in 1613,) of the family of Romanoff to the throne, in the person of the Czar Michael, by restoring a more settled government, contributed to advance the cause of letters. The monk Beründa Pameva, published about this time a Slavo-Russian Lexicon, which exhibits in its etymologies an acquaintance with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.§

* For some account of this traveller see Otto's Lehrbuch der Russischen Literatur, p. 231.

† König's Literarische Bilder aus Russland, p. 33.

‡ Ibid.

§ Otto's Lehrbuch, p. 246. Pameva was not properly a Russian, having been born in Moldavia; but he became a monk at Kiew, which thenceforward was the country of his adoption.

A school was founded at Moscow by the priest-monk Arsenius, for the study of Greek and Latin, in 1643, one of the scholars of which, Theodore Rtischtscheff, founded a society for translating works from foreign languages in 1649; and another school of still more wide-spread influence was opened in the Monastery of Saikonosspassk, in 1682. It is worthy of remark, nevertheless, that the first Russian grammar, that of Ludolf,* was printed, not at any native press, but in the University of Oxford.

One of the members of the Translation Society alluded to above, the monk Epiphanius Slawinezki, appears to have been regarded by his contemporaries as a linguist of notable attainments. He published a Greek, Latin, and Slavonic Dictionary, and commenced a Slavonic translation of the Bible from the original Greek, which was cut short by his death in 1676; but there is no reason to believe that he was acquainted with any of the Oriental languages; and the inference to be drawn from the reputation which he enjoyed on so slight a foundation, is far from creditable to the linguistic attainments of his time.

It is only from the reign of Peter the Great that the history of this, as of all other branches of Russian enlightenment, may be properly said to commence. Independently of the encouragement which Peter held out to foreign talent to devote itself to his service, the grand and comprehensive scheme of the academy which he planned under the direction of Leibnitz, contained a special provision for the department of languages.† And although it was not formally opened until after Peter's death, by the Empress Catherine I. (1725), the influence of the policy in which it originated, had made itself felt long before. The Czar's favourite, Mentschikoff, who from an obscure origin (1674-1729) built up the fortunes of what is now one of the greatest houses of Russia, was master of eight languages, most of which he spoke with perfect fluency. Demetrius Kantemir, (1673-1723), father of the celebrated poet of that name, deserves also to be noticed. He was descended of a Turkish family, and held the office of Hospodar of Moldavia; but he prized his literary reputation more than his rank. He appears to have been a scholar in the highest sense of the name, and was familiarly acquainted, not only

* Grammatica Russica et Manuductio ad Linguam Slavorum, Oxford, 1696.

† See Guhrauer's "*Leibnitz, eine Biographie*," Vol. II., pp. 271-5, for the details of this magnificent scheme.

with the living languages which are so easily acquired by his countrymen, but with several of the learned languages, both of the East and the West.* The poet, his son Antiochus Demetrjewitsch, is also described as "master of several languages, ancient and modern."† The same may be inferred regarding the great traveller, Basilius Gregorowitsch Barskj, who was born at Kiew, in 1702. He must necessarily have acquired, during his long and adventurous wanderings in Europe and the East, a familiarity with many of the languages of the various countries through which he journeyed, although he was prevented from turning it to account upon his return to Russia by his premature death in 1747.‡

Basilius Nikititsch Tatisscheff, one of the youths sent abroad by Peter the Great, for the purpose of studying in the foreign universities, enjoyed a considerable reputation as a linguist.§ The History of Russia which he compiled, supposes a familiarity with several Asiatic, as well as European languages; but, as it is not improbable that part of the materials which he employed in this history were translated for his use by assistants engaged for the purpose, it may be doubted whether this can be assumed as a fair test of his own capabilities. The linguistic attainments of the celebrated poet Lemonossoff, ‖ although considerable, form his least solid title to fame. His history is so full of interest, that its incidents, almost utterly unvarnished, have supplied the narrative of one of the most popular of modern Russian novels. Born (1711) in a rude fisher's hut in the wretched village of Denissowka on the shore of the Frozen Ocean, he rose by his own unassisted genius not only to high eminence in science, but to the very first rank in the literature of his native country, of which he may truly be described as the founder; and, although he does not seem to have made languages a special study, he deserves to be noticed even in this department. He was perfect master of Greek, Latin, French, and German; and possessed with other ancient and modern languages, an acquaintance sufficient for all the purposes of study. The attainments of his con-

* Otto's Lehrbuch, p. 179.

† See an article on "Russian Literature," *Foreign Quart. Review*, Vol. 1., p. 610.

‡ See an interesting notice in Otto's Lehrbuch, *sub voce*.

§ Otto's Lehrbuch, p. 294. 5.

‖ See König's *Literarische Bilder aus Russland*, p. 38, also Otto's *Lehrbuch*, p. 204, and Bowring's *Russian Anthology*, 1. 205. 8. His works fill 6 vols. 8vo. 1804.

temporary, Basilius Petrowitsch Petroff, (1736) were perhaps more profound. He was a scholar of the celebrated convent of Saikonosspassk; and having attracted notice by an ode which he composed for the coronation of the Empress Catherine, he was employed, through the influence of Potemkin, at the English and several other European courts. Through the opportunities which he thus enjoyed, he became one of the best linguists of his day, and we may form an estimate of his zeal and perseverance from the circumstance of his having learned Romaic after his sixtieth year.* Gabriel, Archbishop of St. Petersburg, (1775—1801) and one of the most distinguished pulpit orators of Russia, is also mentioned as a very remarkable linguist.† His success, however, lay chiefly in modern languages.

The most eminent scholars engaged in the philological and ethnological investigations undertaken by the Empress Catherine II. were foreigners; as, for example, Pallas, and Bakmeister. Some, however, were native Russians, but few details are preserved regarding them. Of Sujeff, who accompanied Pallas in the expedition to Tartary and China, and who translated the journals of the expedition into Russian,‡ I have not been able to obtain any particulars. I have been equally unsuccessful as to the history of Theodore Mirievo de Jankiewitsch, the compiler of the alphabetical Digest of Pallas's Comparative Vocabulary, described in a former page; but it can scarcely be doubted, from the very nature of his task, that he must have been a man of no ordinary acquirements as a linguist, at least as regards the vocabularies of language.

During the present century a good deal has been done in Russia for the cultivation of particular families of languages. The "Lazareff Institute," founded at Moscow in 1813,§ by an Armenian family from which it takes its name, comprehends in its truly munificent scheme of education not only the Armenian, Georgian, and Tartar languages, but also the several members of the Caucasian family. ‖ An Oriental Institute¶ on a somewhat similar plan was established at

* Otto's Lehrbuch, p. 257.

† Biograph. Univ. VIII. p. 87.

‡ Otto's Lehrbuch, p. 246.

§ See an interesting sketch of this institute, by M. Dulaurier: L'Institut Lazareff des Langues Orientales, Paris 1856.

‖ Dulaurier, p. 48.

¶ Historic View of the Language and Literature of the Slavonic Nations, by Talvi—the pseudonym of Theresa A. L. von Jacob,

St. Petersburg in 1823. Another was opened at the still more favourable centre of languages, Odessa, in 1829; and a fourth, yet more recently, at Kazan, the meeting point of the two great classes of languages which practically divide between them the entire Russian Empire.* Individual scholars, too, have taken to themselves particular branches of the study, some of them with very remarkable success. Timkoffsky, the well-known missionary in China,† and Hyacinth Bitchourin, who was head of the Pekin Russian Mission from 1808 to 1812, have contributed to popularize the study of Chinese.‡ Igumnoff of Irkutsch published a useful dictionary of the Mongol: Giganoff, and more recently Volkoff, a dictionary of the Tartar languages; of which Mirza Kazem-Beg, professor of the Turkish and Tartar languages at St. Petersburg, has compiled an excellent grammar. The same service has been rendered to the language of Georgia and its several dialects by David Tchubinoff.§ The numerous philological writings of Goulianoff, too, and, more lately, Prince Alexander Handjeri's *Dictionnaire Français, Arabe, Persan, et Turc,*‖ have established a European reputation.

The present Prefect Apostolic of the Arctic Missions, who is a convert from the Russian Church, is said to be a very extraordinary linguist. Even before he entered upon his missionary charge, in which, of course, the circle of his languages is much enlarged, he habitually heard confessions, at Paris, in six languages.

Perhaps also it may be permitted to enumerate among Russian linguists three eminent literary men who have long been resident at St. Petersburg, and who, although not natives of Russia, may now be regarded as naturalized subjects of the Empire—Senkowsky, Gretsch and Mirza Kazem-Beg.

The first is by birth a Pole;¶ but having early attained to much eminence as an Orientalist, and having travelled with

(formed of her several initials), daughter of the celebrated Professor von Jacob, and now wife of Dr. Robinson the eminent American Biblical scholar, p. 73.

* Ibid.

† Travels of the Russian Mission through Mongolia and China, 2 vols. 8vo, 1827.

‡ Historical View of Slavonic Languages, p. 32.

§ Ibid, p. 98. His Georgian Dictionary obtained the Demidoff prize. See catalogue de l'Academie Imperiale a St. Petersbourg, p. 58.

‖ 3 vols. 4to. Moscow, 1840.

¶ Literarische Bilder aus Russland (König), pp. 312-21.

some reputation as an explorer in Syria and Egypt, he obtained the Professorship of Oriental languages in the university of St. Petersburg, in which he has since distinguished himself by an important controversy with the celebrated Von Hammer. Senkowsky, since his residence in St. Petersburg, has made the Russian language his own, and is one of the most prolific writers in the entire range of modern Russian literature. His grammar of that language is among the most intelligible to foreigners that has ever been issued. With most of the languages of Europe, he is said to be perfectly familiar, and his attainments as an Orientalist are of the very highest rank. He is a corresponding member of the Asiatic Societies of most of the capitals of Europe, and publishes indifferently in Polish, Russian, German, and French.

Gretsch, the editor of the well-known St. Petersburg Journal, "The Northern Bee," is perhaps less profound, but equally varied in his attainments. Although a German by birth, he writes exclusively in Russian, and is the author of the best and most popular extant history of Russian literature; of which Otto's *Lehrbuch der Russischen Literatur*, although apparently an independent work, is almost a literal translation.*

Mirza Kazem-Beg is of the Tartar race, but a native of Astracan, where his father, a man of much reputation for learning, had settled about the commencement of the century. Soon after the establishment of the professorship of the Turkish and Tartar languages at Kazan, Kazem-Beg was selected to fill it; and, after some time, he was removed to the same chair in the University of Petersburg, which he still holds. Besides the ordinary learned languages, he is acquainted with the Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, Syrian, Persian, and Turkish, as well as those of the Tartar stock; and he is described as perfect master of the modern European languages, especially French, Italian, German, and English. The last named language he speaks and writes with great ease and elegance, and has even published some translations into it, as, for example, the "Derbend-Nâmeh."†

The reputation of the Poles as linguists is equally high. So far back as the election of Henry de Valois, Choisnin, who

* Literature and Language of Slavonic Nations, p. 244.
† In one vol. 4to, Petersburg, 1851.

accompanied Henry to Poland, says that of the two hundred Polish nobles who were then assembled, there were hardly two who did not speak, in addition to their native Polish, German, Italian, and Latin.* So universal was the knowledge of the last named language that, with perhaps a pardonable exaggeration, Martin Kromer alleges that there were fewer in Poland than in Latium itself who did not speak it.†

Nevertheless, few names present themselves in this department which have left any permanent trace in history. Francis Meninski, the learned author of the *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium*,‡ was not only a profound scholar in most of the ancient and modern languages, but, from his long residence in the East, and from the office of Oriental Interpreter which he held, first in the Polish and afterwards in the Imperial service, must be presumed to have spoken them freely and familiarly. But Meninski was a native of Lorraine, and by some is believed to have been originally named *Menin*, and only to have adopted the Polish affix, *ski*, on receiving from the Diet his patent of naturalization and nobility.

Among the early Polish Jesuits were many accomplished classical and Oriental linguists, but in the absence of any particulars of their attainments, it would be uninteresting to enumerate them. In later times the names of Groddek and Bobrowski may be mentioned as philologers, if not as linguists. The learned Jesuit historian, John Christopher Albertrandy, also, possesses this among many other titles to fame. He was a most laborious and successful collector of materials for Polish history, in search of which he explored the libraries of Italy,

* De Origine et Rebus Gestis Polonorum, Lib. XXX., ibid. 244.

† Lit. and Lang. of Slavonic Nations, p. 178.

‡ The *Thesaurus* (4 vols. folio, Vienna 1680) supposes in its author a knowledge of at least eight different languages, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Latin, Italian, French, German, and Polish. Meninski was a man of indomitable energy. In two successive pamphlets which he published in the course of a controversy which he carried on with his great rival, Podestà (who was professor of Arabic in the University) he went to the pains of actually *transcribing with his own hand in each copy* the quotations from Oriental authors, as there were no Oriental types in Vienna from which they could be printed! Meninski's Thesaurus, however, is best known from the learned edition of it which was printed at Vienna (1780-1802) under the revision of Baron von Ienisch, himself an Orientalist of very high reputation, and for a considerable time interpreter of the Austrian embassy at Constantinople.

from whence he carried home, after three years of patient research, a hundred and ten folio volumes of extracts copied with his own hand! From Italy he proceeded to Stockholm and Upsala, where many important documents connected with the time of John III. and Sigismond III. are preserved: and here, being, from some unworthy jealousy, only permitted to inspect the desired documents on the condition of not making notes or copies in the library, his prodigious memory enabled him on his return each evening to his apartments, to commit to writing what he had read during the day, and the collection thus formed amounted to no fewer than ninety folio volumes!* Albertrandy's historical works are very numerous; and when his labours in this department are remembered, his success as a linguist will appear almost prodigious. Besides Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, he knew most of the modern languages, French, English, Italian, German, and Russian, and spoke the majority of them with ease and propriety.

The well-known Polish General, Wenceslaus Rzewuski, devoted the later years of his busy and chequered career to literary, and especially to linguistic, pursuits. He is said to have spoken the learned tongues as well and as freely as his native Polish, and to have been master, moreover, of all the leading modern languages of Europe. The great Oriental Journal published at Vienna, *Fundgruben des Orients*, which is really what its title implies, a *mine* of Oriental learning, was for many years under his superintendence.

The Russo-Polish diplomatist, Count Andrew Italinski, is another example of the union of profound scholarship with great talents for public affairs. Born in Poland about the middle of the eighteenth century, Italinski visited in the successive stages of his education, Kiew, Leyden, Edinburgh, London, Paris, and Berlin, and acquired the languages of all those various countries. Being eventually appointed to the Russian embassy in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, he became even more perfect in Italian. In addition to all these languages, he was so thoroughly master of those of the East, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, &c., as to challenge the admiration even of the Easterns themselves.†

It is perhaps right to add that the eminent Orientalist of St. Petersburg, Senkowsky, although a Russian by residence

* Literature of Slavonic Nations, 270. See also an interesting memoir in the *Biographie Universelle*. He was born at Warsaw in 1731, and survived till 1808.

† See Biographie Universelle (Supplement), Vol. LVII., p. 589. Italinski continued and completed D'Hancarville's great work on Etruscan Antiquities.

and by association, is not only, as I have already stated, of Polish birth, but is, moreover, one of the most popular writers in his native language.

Our notice of Bohemian linguists must be even more meagre.

The early period of Bohemian letters presents no distinguished name. From the extraordinary activity which the Bohemians exhibited in translating the Bible in the fifteenth century, it might be supposed that the study of Greek and Hebrew had already taken root in the schools of Prague. But out of the "thirty-three copies in Bohemian of the entire Bible, and twenty-two of the New Testament,"* which are still extant, translated during that period, not one was rendered from the original languages. Blakoslav, the first translator of the Bible from Greek (in 1563) is said to have been a man of "profound erudition." The same is said of George Strye a few years later; and the Jesuits Konstanj, Steyer, and Drachovsky, are also entitled to notice.

John Amos Komnensky, also, better known by his Latinized name, Comenius, a native of Komna in Moravia, (1592-1671) deserved well of linguistic science, not only by his own acquirements, but by his well-known work, the *Janua Linguarum Reserata*, which has had the rare fortune of being translated not only into twelve European languages, but into those of several Oriental nations besides. The *Janua Linguarum*, however, though it attracted much attention at the time, has long been forgotten.

It would be still more unpardonable to overlook the celebrated philologer, Father Joseph Dobrowsky, who, although born in Raab, in Hungary, was of a Bohemian family, and devoted himself especially to the literature and language of his nation. He had just entered the Jesuit society at Brunn at the moment of the suppression of the order. Repairing to Prague, he applied himself for a time to the study of the Oriental languages, but eventually concentrated all his energies on the history and language of Bohemia. His works upon Bohemian history and antiquities fill many volumes; and his Slavonic Grammar may be regarded as a classical work, not only in reference to his native language, but to the whole

* Ibid., p. 190.

Slavonian family. Father Dobrowsky survived till the year 1829, engaged until the very time of his death in active projects for the cultivation of the language and literature of the country of his adoption.

But probably the most remarkable name among Bohemian linguists is that of Father Dobrowsky's friend, the poet Wenceslaus Hanka, born at Horeneyes in 1791. Hanka's love of languages was first stirred while he was tending sheep near his native village, by the opportunity which he had of learning Polish and Servian from some soldiers of these races being quartered upon his father's farm. When he grew somewhat older, his parents, in order to save him from the chances of military conscription, (from which, in Bohemia, scholars are exempted) sent him to school; and he afterwards entered the University of Prague, and subsequently that of Vienna. On the foundation of the Bohemian Museum at Prague, he was appointed its librarian, through the recommendation of Father Dobrowsky; and from that time he devoted himself almost entirely to the antiquities, literature, and language of his native country. Besides his own original compositions, Hanka's name has obtained considerable celebrity in connexion with the controversy about the genuiness of the early Bohemian poems known under the title of "Kralodvor,"—a controversy which, although it has ended differently, was for a time hardly less animated than those regarding the Ossian and Rowley MSS. in England. Notwithstanding the variety of Hanka's pursuits, and his especial devotion to his own language, his acquisitions in languages have been most various and extensive. He is described in the "Oesterreichische National Encyclopædie" as "master of eighteen languages."*

With the Slavonic race our Catalogue of Linguists closes. Many particulars regarding the eminent names which it comprises are, of necessity, left vague and undetermined. I should have especially desired to distinguish, in all cases, between mere book knowledge of languages and the power of writing, or still more of speaking, them. But unfortunately the accounts which are preserved regarding these scholars hardly ever enter into this distinction. Even Sir William

* See an interesting memoir in Knight's Cyclopædia of Biography, Vol. III., pp. 280-1.

Jones, though he carefully classified the languages which he knew, did not specify this particular; and in most other instances, the narrative, far from particularizing, like that of Jones, the extent of the individual's acquaintance with each language, even leaves in uncertainty the number of languages with which he was acquainted in any degree.

The very distribution, too, which I have found it expedient to follow—according to nations—has had many disadvantages. But it seemed to be upon the whole the most convenient that could be devised. A distribution into periods, besides that it would have been difficult to follow out upon any clear and intelligible principle, would have been attended with the same disadvantages which characterize that according to nations; while the more strictly philosophical distribution according to ethnographical or philological schools, would have in great measure failed to illustrate the object which I have chiefly had in view. Several of the most eminent of the modern ethnographical writers, and particularly Pritchard, disavow all claim to the character of linguists; and the qualifications of many even of those whose pretensions seem the highest, have, when submitted to a rigid examination, proved far more than problematical.

There are many curious details, however, into which, if space permitted, it would be interesting to pursue this inquiry.

It might seem natural, for instance, to investigate the nature and extent of the Miraculous Gift of Languages—the γένη γλωσσῶν of St. Paul—whether that possessed by the Apostles and other early teachers of Christianity, or that ascribed in later times to the missionaries among the Heathen, and especially to the great Apostle of India, St. Francis Xavier. Materials are not wanting for such an investigation;* but as it can hardly be said to bear upon the subject of this Biography, I have reluctantly passed it by.

The history of Royal Linguists, too, might afford much amusing material for speculation. Mithridates, King of Pontus, as we have seen, spoke twenty-two languages. Cleopatra was

* See Staudenmaier's "Pragmatismus der Geistes-gaben," [Tübingen 1835], and Englmann's "Von der Charismen im allgemeinen, und von dem Sprachen-charismen im Besondern." [Regensburg, 1848]. See also a long list of earlier writers (chiefly Rationalistic) in Kuinoel's "Commentarius in Libros N. T." vol. IV. pp. 40-2; also in Englmann, pp. 15-23.

mistress, not only of seven languages enumerated by Plutarch, but, if we may believe his testimony, of most other known languages of the time. The accomplished, but ill-fated, Queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, was familiar with Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Egyptian; and it may be presumed from the notion which prevailed among some Christian writers of her being a Jewess, that she was also acquainted with Hebrew or its kindred tongues.* Most of the Roman Emperors were able indifferently to speak Greek or Latin.

The mediæval sovereigns, with the exception of Frederic II., referred to in a former page,† and the great and learned Pope Sylvester II., better known by his family name Gerbert,‡ share, as linguists, the common mediocrity of the age. The learned Princess Anna Comnena does not appear at all distinguished in this particular; Charlemagne's reputation rests on his acquaintance with Latin, and perhaps also Greek; and our own Alfred was regarded as a notable example of success, although there is no evidence that his linguistic attainments extended beyond a knowledge of Latin.

* Jost's Geschichte der Israeliten, VI., 166.

† P. 15. The example and patronage of Frederic tended much to promote the rivival of Oriental studies. Many of the earliest version of the works of Aristotle from the Arabic, were made under his auspices or those of his son Manfred; among others (compare Jourdain's "Recherches sur les Traductions Latines d'Aristote," p. 124, Paris 1843; also Whewell's "History of the Inductive Sciences," I., p. 343;) that of Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie, a learned Orientalist and an accomplished general scholar, although his traditionary character is that of "the wizard Michael Scott." His namesake, Sir Walter, has immortalized him, not as a scholar, but as

> "A wizard of such dreaded fame,
> That when, in Salamanca's cave,
> Him listed his magic wand to wave
> The bells would ring in Notre Dame!"

Roger Bacon's skill in Arabic and other Eastern tongues was probably one of the causes which drew upon him the same evil reputation. I should have mentioned Bacon among the few notable mediæval linguists. He was "an industrious student of Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and the modern tongues. (Milman's Latin Christianity, VI., p. 477). Perhaps I ought also to have named Albert the Great (Ibid., p. 453); but I am rather disposed to believe that the knowledge which he had of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic authors, was derived from Latin versions, and not from the original works themselves.

‡ Gerbert travelled to Spain with the express purpose of studying in the Arabian schools. See Hock's "Sylvester II., und sein Jahrhundert;" also Whewell's "Inductive Sciences," I., 273.

Very early, however, after the revival of letters, Matthias Corvinus, the learned and munificent King of Hungary, attained a rank as a linguist not unworthy of a later day. Besides the learned languages, he was also acquainted with most of the living tongues of Europe. Charles V. knew and spoke five languages.* Henry VIII. spoke four. Several of the Roman Pontiffs, particularly Paul IV., in other respects also a most remarkable scholar,† and the great Benedict XIV., were learned Orientalists, as well as good general linguists. The house of Stuart was eminent for the gift of tongues. The ill-fated Mary of Scotland spoke most of the European languages. James I., her son, with all his silly pedantry, was by no means a contemptible linguist. His grandson, Charles II., spoke French and Spanish fluently; and his brilliant grand-daughter, Elizabeth of Bavaria, who alone, according to Descartes, of all her contemporaries, was able to understand the Cartesian philosophy, was mistress, besides many scientific and literary accomplishments, of no fewer than six languages.‡ Christina of Sweden surpassed her in one particular. She knew as many as eight languages, the major part of which she spoke fluently.

Nor are the courts of our own day without examples of the same acquirement. The late Emperor of Russia spoke five languages. Several of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, Queen Victoria, Alexander of Russia, and Napoleon III. among the number, enjoy the reputation of excellent linguists. The young Emperor of Austria is an accomplished classical scholar, and a perfect master of French, and of all the languages of his own vast empire—German, Italian, Hungarian, Czechish, and Servian! Prince Lewis Lucian Bonaparte is a distinguished philologer, as well as a skilful linguist. His "Polyglot Parable of the Sower" is an interesting contribution to the former science. Even the remote kingdom of Siam furnishes, in its two Royal brothers, the First and the Second King, an example more deserving of praise than would be a far higher success in a more favoured land. The First King, Somdetch Phra Paramendt Maha Mongkut,§ has evinced a degree of intel-

* Duret's *Thresor*, p. 963.

† Paul IV. is mentioned by Cancellieri, as having known the entire Bible by heart. He names several other men, (one of them *blind*,) and *six ladies*, who could do the same; he tells of one man who could repeat it in Hebrew.

‡ Kemble's Social and Political State of Europe, p. 9.

§ His full name is "Phra Bard Somdetch Phra Paramendt Maha

lectual activity, rare indeed among the potentates of the East. Besides the ancient language and literature of his own kingdom, and all its modern dialects and sub-divisions, he knows Sanscrit, Cingalese, and Peguan. From the Catholic missionaries, especially Bishop Pallegoix, he has learned Latin and also Greek, and from the American Baptists, English. His letters, though sometimes unidiomatical, are highly characteristic, and display much intelligence and ability. He is also well versed in European sciences, especially astronomy and mechanics. He has formed, moreover, a very considerable collection of astronomical and philosophical apparatus; has established printing and lithographic presses in the palace; and has imported steam machinery of various kinds from America. It is gratifying to add that his brother, the Second King, shares all his tastes, and is treading worthily in his footsteps.

A still more attractive topic would be the long line of Lady-Linguists.

It is not a little remarkable that, among the sovereigns who have distinguished themselves as linguists, the proportion of queens is very considerable. The three names, Cleopatra, Zenobia, and Christina of Sweden, unquestionably represent a larger aggregate of languages than any three of the king-linguists, if we exclude Mithridates.

Nor are the humbler lady-linguists unworthy this companionship. The nun Roswitha, of Gandesheim, still favourably known by her sacred Latin poetry, was also acquainted with Greek—a rare accomplishment in the tenth century. Tarquinia Molza, grand-daughter of the gifted, but licentious poet of the same name, knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as well as the ordinary modern languages. Elena Cornaro Piscopia knew Italian, Spanish, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and even Arabic.* Nay, strange as it may seem in modern eyes, the university of Bologna numbers several ladies among the occupants of its pulpits. The beautiful Novella d'Andrea, daughter of the great jurist, Giovanni d'Andrea, professor of law in the

Mongkut Phra Chom Klau Chau Hu Yua." *Bowring's Siam*, (Dedication.) The account of the king is most interesting.

* Valery. Voyage Litteraire de l'Italie, p. 237. I have just met a modern parallel for her. The brilliant Mme. Henrietta Herz, according to her new biographer, Dr. Fürst, knew Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, German, English, and Swedish, besides a slight knowledge of Sanscrit, Turkish, and Malay—"Henriette Herz, ihre Leben und Erinnerurgen," Berlin, 1858.

University of Bologna in the 15th century, was wont to take her father's place as lecturer on law; observing, however, the precaution of using a veil, lest her beauty should distract the attention of her pupils. Her mother Milancia, scarcely less learned, was habitually consulted by Giovanni on all questions of special difficulty which arose.* Laura Bassi held the chair of philosophy in more modern times.† Clotilda Tambroni, the last and not the least distinguished of the lady professors of Bologna, has, besides her literary glories, the honour of having suffered in the cause of loyalty and religion. Like her friend and fellow professor, Mezzofanti, she refused, on the occupation of Bologna by the French, to take the oaths of the new government, and was deprived of the professorship of Greek in consequence.

The learned ladies of Bologna are not alone among their countrywomen. The celebrated Dominican nun, Cassandra Fedele of Venice; Alessandra Scala of Florence; and Olympia Fulvia Morata of Ferrara, are all equally distinguished as proficients in at least two learned languages, Latin and Greek. Margherita Gaetana Agnesi, of Milan, was familiar with Latin at nine years of age; and, while still extremely young, mastered Greek and Hebrew, together with French, Spanish, and German. In the very meridian of her fame, nevertheless, she renounced the brilliant career which lay open to her, in order to devote herself to God as a Sister of Charity. Another fair Italian, Modesta Pozzo, born at Venice in 1555, deserves to be mentioned, although she is better known for her extraordinary powers of memory, than her skill in languages.‡ She was able to repeat the longest sermon after hearing it but once.

Nor are we without examples, although perhaps not so numerous, in other countries. Many Spanish and Portuguese ladies learned in languages, are enumerated by Nicholas de Antonio.§ Dona Anna de Villegas, and D. Cecilia di Arellano, besides being excellent Latinists, were mistresses of French, Italian, and Portuguese.‖ To these languages D.

* Tiraboschi Storia, Vol. V., p. 358.

† Valery, 237. Fleck (Wissenschaftliche Reise II., p. 97) says Anatomy; but this is a mistake. There is a very interesting sketch of Laura Bassi in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, New Series, Vol. XII., pp. 31-2. She was solemnly admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1732.

‡ Cancellieri, "Uomini di gran Memoria."

§ In the Bibliotheca Hispana, Vol. IV., pp. 344-53.

‖ Ibid, p. 345.

Cecilia de Morellas added Greek as one of her accomplishments,* and D. Juliana de Morell, a nun of the Dominican order in the middle of the seventeenth century, in addition to these languages, was not only a learned Hebraist, but an acute and skilful disputant in the philosophy of the schools.†

The accomplished Anna Maria Schurmann, of whom Cologne is still justly proud, in addition to her numerous gifts in painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, was mistress of eight languages, among which were Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Ethiopic.

The brilliant, but eccentric Russian Princess Dashkoff, holds a still more prominent place in the world of letters. The early friend and confidant of the Empress Catherine, and (with a few alternations of disfavour,) the sharer of most of the literary projects of that extraordinary woman, the Princess Dashkoff had the (for a lady rare) honour of holding the place of President of the Russian Academy. When the Dictionary of the Academy was projected, she actually undertook, in her own person, three letters of the work, together with the general superintendence of the entire ! The princess was not unfamiliar with the learned languages, some of which she not only spoke but wrote : but her chief attainments were in those of modern Europe. Her autobiographical Memoirs appear to have been written in French ; and the English letters embodied in the work prove her to have possessed a thorough knowledge of that language also.

Some of our own countrywomen, if less showy, may perhaps advance a more solid title to distinction. The beautiful Mrs. Carter, translator of Epictetus, well deserves to be mentioned; and the amiable and singularly gifted Elizabeth Smith, is a not unmeet consort for the most eminent linguists of any age. "With scarcely any assistance," writes her biographer, Mrs. Bowdler, to Dr. Mummsen,‡ "she taught herself the French, Italian, Greek, Latin, Spanish, German, and Hebrew languages. She had no inconsiderable knowledge of Arabic and Persian." Her translation of the Book of Job is a permanent evidence that her knowledge of Hebrew was of no ordinary kind.

* Bibliotheca Hispana, vol. IV. p. 346.

† P. 346. An ode of Lope Vega's in her praise describes her as a "fourth Grace," and a "tenth Muse"—"que as hecho quatre las Gracias y las Musas diez."

‡ Fragments in Prose and Verse, by Elizabeth Smith. With a Life by Mrs. Bowdler, (Bath, 1810,) p. 264.

Even the New World has supplied some names to this interesting catalogue. The Mexican poetess, Juana Inez de la Cruz, better known as the "Nun of Mexico," (1651-95), a marvel of precocious knowledge, learned Latin in twenty lessons, when a mere girl; and quickly became such a proficient as to speak it with ease and fluency. Her acquisitions in general learning were most various and extensive; and when on one occasion, in her seventeenth year, forty learned men of Mexico were invited to dispute with her, she proved a match for each in his own particular department. All these accomplishments, notwithstanding, she had the humility to bury in the obscurity of a convent in Mexico, where she silently devoted herself for twenty-seven years to literature and religion. She died in 1695, leaving behind many works still regarded as classics in the language, which fill no less than three 4to. volumes, and have passed through twelve successive editions in Spain. All, with the exception of two, are on sacred subjects.*

"Infant Phenomena" of language would supply another curious and fertile topic for inquiry—an inquiry too in a psychological point of view eminently interesting.

Many of the great linguists enumerated in this Memoir, Pico of Mirandola, Crichton, Martin del Rio, and several others, owed part of their celebrity to the marvelous precociousness of their gifts. A far larger proportion, however, of those who prematurely displayed this talent, were cut off before it had attained any mature or healthy development.

Cancellieri† mentions a child named Jacopo Martino,‡ born at Racuno, in the Venetian territory, in 1639, who not only acquired a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, between the age of three and seven, but made such progress in philosophical science as successfully to maintain a public thesis in philosophy at Rome, when no more than eight years of age.§ This extraordinary child, however, died of exhaustion in 1649, before he had completed his ninth year.

It was the same for Claudio del Valle y Hernandez, a Spanish prodigy, mentioned by the same author.

* Knight's Cyclopædia of Biography, II. 419.

† "Sugli Uomini di gran Memoria," pp. 72-80.

‡ His family name seems unknown; his father, who was a *facchino*, (or porter,) being called simply *Il Modenese*.

§ So marvellous was his performance, that it was seriously ascribed to the Devil by Candido Brognolo, in his "*Alexicacon*," (Venice 1663), and Padre Cardi thought it not beneath him to publish a formal reply to this charge.

But probably the most extraordinary examples of this psychological phenomenon upon record, occur, by a curious coincidence, almost at the very same date in the commencement of the eighteenth century. Within the three years, from 1719 to 1721, were born in different countries, three children of a precociousness (even though we accept the traditions regarding them with great deductions,) entirely without parallel in history.

The first of these, John Lewis Candiac, was born at Nismes, in 1719. This strangely gifted child, we are told, was able, in his third year, to speak not only his native French but also Latin. Before he was six years old he spoke also Greek and Hebrew. He was well versed, besides, in arithmetic, geography, ancient and modern history, and even heraldry.* But, as might be expected, these premature efforts quickly exhausted his overtaxed powers, and he died of water on the brain in 1726, at seven years of age.

Christian Henry Heinecken, a child of equal promise, was cut off even more prematurely. He was born at Lubeck in 1721. He is said to have been able to speak at ten months old. By the time he attained his twelfth month, he had learned, if his biographers can be credited, all the facts in the history of the Pentateuch.† In another month he added to this all the rest of the history of the old Testament; and, when he was but fourteen months old, he was master of all the leading facts of the Bible! At two and a half years of age, he spoke fluently, besides his native German, the French and Latin languages. In this year he was presented at the Danish court, where he excited universal astonishment. But, on his return home, he fell sick and died in his fourth year.

The third of these marvels of precocity, John Philip Baratier, who is probably known to many readers by Johnson's interesting memoir,‡ was born at Anspach in the same year with Heinecken, 1721. His career, however, was not so brief, nor were its fruits so ephemeral, as those of the ill-fated children just named. When Baratier was only four years old, he was able to speak Latin, French, and German. At six he spoke Greek; and at nine Hebrew; in which latter language the soundness of his attainments is attested by a lexicon which he published in his eleventh year. Nor was Baratier a mere

* Feller, III. 132.
† Ibid, p. 70.
‡ Johnsons's Works, VI. p. 368-74.

linguist. He is said to have mastered elementary mathematics in three months, and to have qualified himself by thirteen month's study for the ordinary thesis maintained at taking out the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was also well versed in architecture, in ancient and modern literature, in antiquities, and even the uncommon science of numismatics. He translated from the Hebrew Benjamin of Tudela's "Itinerary." He published a detailed and critical account of the Rabbinical Bible; and communicated to several societies elaborate papers on astronomical and mathematical subjects. This extraordinary youth died at the age of nineteen in 1760.

Later* in the same century was born at Rome a child named Giovanni Cristoforo Amaduzzi,† if not quite so precocious as this extraordinary trio, at least of riper intellect, and destined to survive for greater distinction and for a more useful career. The precise dates of his various attainments do not appear to be chronicled; but, when he was only twelve years old, he published a poetical translation of the Hecuba of Euripides, which excited universal surprise; and a few years later, on the visit of the Emperor Joseph II. and his brother Leopold to Rome, he addressed to the Emperor a polyglot ode of welcome in Greek, Latin, Italian, and French. His after studies, however, were more serious and more practical. He is well-known, not only as a linguist, but also as a philologer of some merit; and in his capacity of corrector of the Propaganda Oriental Press, a post which he filled till his death, in 1792, he rendered many important services to Oriental studies.‡

It would be interesting too, and not without its advantage in reference to the history of the human mind, to collect examples of what may be called Uneducated Linguists; of

* The Biographie Universelle places Amaduzzi's birth (curiously enough for its coincidence with those of the three just mentioned), in 1720: but this is a mistake; he was seventeen years old at the visit of Joseph II. to Rome, in 1767. His birth therefore must be assigned to 1750.

† Cancellieri, pp. 84-7.

‡ The learned patristical scholar, John Baptist Cotelier, (Cotelerius,) is another example of precocious development leading to solid fruit. At twelve years of age Cotelier could read and translate fluently any part of the Bible that was opened for him! I may also recall here the case of Dr. Thomas Young, of whom I have already spoken. His early feat of reading the entire Bible twice through before he was four months old, is hardly less wonderful than any of those above recorded. See National Review, vol. II. p. 69.

Dragomans, Couriers, "Lohnbedienter," and others*, who, ignorant of all else besides, have acquired a facility almost marvelous of speaking several languages fluently, and in many cases with sufficient seeming accuracy.

Perhaps this is the place to mention the once notorious (to use his own favourite designation) "Odcombian Leg-stretcher," Tom Coryat, a native of Odcombe in Somersetshire (1577-1617), and author of the now rare volume, "Coryat's Crudities."† Coryat may fairly be described as "an uneducated linguist;" for, although he passed through Westminster School, and afterwards entered Gloucester Hall, Oxford, the languages which he learned were all picked up, without regular study, during his long pedestrian wanderings in every part of the world; one of which, of nearly two thousand miles, he accomplished in a single pair of shoes, (which he hung up in the church of Odcombe as a votive offering on his return), and another, of no less than two thousand seven hundred, at a cost of about three pounds sterling! This strange genius acquired, in a sufficient degree for all the wants of conversation, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani!

Another singularity of the same kind was Robert Hill, the Jewish tailor, whom Spence has made the subject of an exceed-

* A vocalist, named H. K. von Freher, has appeared recently, who advertises *to sing* in thirty-six different languages! He is a native of Hungary. With how many of these languages, however, he professes to be acquainted, and what degree of familiarity he claims with each, I am unable to say; but he is described in the public journals as "speaking English with purity;" and in one of his latest performances he favoured the audience with "portions of songs in no less than three or four and twenty different languages, commencing with a Russian hymn, and proceeding on with a French romance, a Styrian song, a Polish air, which he screeched most amusingly, a Sicilian song, as dismal as the far-famed Vespers of that country, a Canadian ditty, a Hungarian serenade, a Maltese air a Bavarian, a Neapolitan barcarole, a Hebrew psalm, a Tyrolean air, in which the rapid changes from the basso profondo to the falsetto had a most singular effect."

† The title of this singular volume is worth transcribing: "Coryat's Crudities, hastily gobbled up in five months' Travels in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia, (commonly called the Grisons' Country), Helvetia, alias Switzerland, some parts of High Germany, and the Netherlands; newly digested in the hungry air of Odcombe in the county of Somersetshire, and now dispersed to the Nourishment of the travelling Members of this Kingdom." 4to. London, 1611. It is further noticeable in this place for a polyglot appendix of quizzical verses in Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, Welsh, Irish, Macaronic, and Utopian, "by various hands."

ingly curious parallel with Magliabecchi.* And many similar examples might doubtless be collected among the couriers, interpreters, and valets-de-place of most of the European capitals. Baron von Zach mentions an ordinary valet-de-place who could speak nearly all the European languages with the greatest ease and correctness, although he was utterly ignorant not only of the grammar of every one of them, but even of that of his own language. I have already said that the same species of talent is hereditary in several families in different ports and cities of the Levant.

The history of such cases as these, if it were possible to investigate it accurately, might throw light on the operations of the mind in the acquisition of languages. These, however, and many similar topics, interesting and curious as they are for their own sake, have but little bearing on the present inquiry; the purpose of which is simply to prepare the way for a fitting estimate of the attainments of the illustrious subject of the following Biography, by placing in contrast with them the gifts of others who, at various times, have risen to eminence in the same department. Cardinal Mezzofanti will be found to stand so immeasurably above even the highest of these names, in the department of language, that, at least for the purposes of comparison with him, its minor celebrities can possess little claim for consideration.

* 1 vol. 12mo, printed at Strawberry Hall, 1758, and re-printed in Dodsley's Collections, 1761.

THE LIFE

OF

CARDINAL MEZZOFANTI.

THE

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CHAPTER I.

[1774-1798.]

A MEMOIR of Cardinal Mezzofanti can be little more than a philological essay. Quiet and uneventful as was his career, its history possesses few of the ordinary attractions of Biography. The main interest of such a narrative must consist in the light which it may tend to throw on the curious problem ;—what degree of perfection the human mind, concentrating its powers upon one department of knowledge, is capable of attaining therein ; and the highest hope of the author is to escape the reproach which Warburton directed against Boileau's biographer, Desmaiseaux, of having "written a book without a life."

Joseph Caspar Mezzofanti,* was born at Bologna,†

* This name was afterwards the subject of a punning epigram. Mezzofanti is a compound word, (like the names Mezzabarba, Mezzavacca, Mezzomorto, &c.,) and means *half-child,* [Mezzo-Fante.] Hence the following distich :—

Dimidium Fantis jam nunc supereminct omnes!
Quid, credis, fieret, si *integer* ipse foret?

† In the Via Malcontenti. The house still exists, but has been entirely remodelled. An inscription for the apartment in which Mezzofanti was born was composed by D. Vincenzo Mignani :—

Heic Mezzofantus natus, notissimus Orbi,
Unus qui linguas calluit omnigenas.

Some years later Francis Mezzofanti removed to a house on the

on the 17th of September, 1774.* His father, Francis Mezzofanti, a native of the same city, was of very humble extraction, and by trade a carpenter. Though almost entirely uneducated,† Francis Mezzofanti is described by the few who remember him, as a man of much shrewdness and intelligence, a skilful mechanic, and universally respected for his integrity, piety, and honourable principles. For Mezzofanti's mother, Gesualda Dall' Olmo, a higher lineage has been claimed;—the name of Dall' Olmo‡ being extremely ancient and not undistinguished in the annals of Bologna; but the fortunes of the immediate branch of that family from which Gesualda Dall' Olmo sprung, were no less humble than those of her husband. Her education, however, was somewhat superior; and with much simplicity and sweetness of disposition, she united excellent talents, great prudence and good sense, and a profoundly religious mind.

opposite side of the same street, in which he thenceforward continued to reside. This house also is still in existence, but has been modernized. In the early part of the year 1800, Mezzofanti established himself, together with the family of his sister, Signora Minarelli, in a separate house, situated however in the same street: but, from the time of his appointment as Librarian, in 1815, till his final removal to Rome, he occupied the Librarian's apartments in the Palazzo Dell' Università.

* There has been some diversity of statement as to the year. The *Enciclopedia Popolare* (Turin 1851, supp. p. 299,) hesitates between 1774 and 1771. But there can be no doubt that it was the former.

† He merely learned to read and write.

‡ Antonio Dall' Olmo was a professor in the University so far back as 1360. See Tiraboschi, "Letteratura Italiana," V. p. 56.

Of this marriage were born several children ; but they all died at an early age, except a daughter named Teresa, and Joseph Caspar, the subject of the present biography. Teresa was the senior by ten years, and, while her brother was yet a boy, married a young man named Joseph Lewis Minarelli,* by trade a hair dresser, to whom she bore a very numerous family,† several of whom still survive. To the kind courtesy of one of these, the Cavaliere Pietro Mina-

* Mingarelli has been a distinguished name in Bolognese letters. The two brothers, Ferdinand and John Lewis, were among the most diligent patristical students of the last century. To the latter (of whom I shall have to speak hereafter,) we are indebted for a learned edition of the lost Περὶ Τριάδος of the celebrated Didymus, the blind teacher of Alexandria ; the former also is spoken of with high praise by Tiraboschi, VII., 1073. This family, however, is different from that of Minarelli, with which Mezzofanti was connected.

† No fewer than eleven sons and four daughters. Of the sons only two are now living—the Cavaliere Pietro Minarelli, who is a physician and member of the Medical Faculty of Bologna, and the Cavaliere Gaetano, an advocate and notary. A third son, Giuseppe, embraced the ecclesiastical profession in which he rose to considerable distinction. He was a linguist of some reputation, being acquainted with no fewer than eight languages, (see the *Cantica di G. Marocco*, p. 12, note,) an accomplishment which he owed mainly to the instruction of his uncle. Some time after the departure of the latter for Rome, Giuseppe was named Rector of the University of Bologna, and honorary Domestic Prelate of the Pope Gregory XVI., but he died at a comparatively early age in 1843. A fourth son, Filippo, became an architect, but was disabled by a paralytic attack from prosecuting his studies, and died after a lingering and painful illness, July 23rd, 1839. The other sons died in childhood. The four daughters, Maria, Anna, Gesualda, and Gertrude, still survive. Maria and Gertrude married—the first, Signor Mazzoli, the second, Signor Calori—and are now widows. Anna and Gesualda are unmarried. The former resided with her uncle, from the time of his elevation to the cardinalate till his death. She is said to be an

relli, I am indebted for a few particulars of the family history, and of the early years of his venerated uncle.

It may be supposed that in the case of Mezzofanti, as in those of most men who attain to eminence in life, there are not wanting marvelous tales of his youthful studies, and anecdotes of the first indications of the extraordinary gift by which his later years were distinguished.

According to one of these accounts, his first years were entirely neglected, and he was placed, while yet a mere child, in the workshop of his father, to learn the trade of a carpenter. As is usual in the towns of Italy, the elder Mezzofanti, for the most part, plied his craft not within doors, but in the open

accomplished painter in water-colours. Her sister, Gesualda, is an excellent linguist.

* I take the earliest opportunity to express my most grateful acknowledgment of the exceeding courtesy, not only of the Cavaliere Minarelli and other members of Cardinal Mezzofanti's family, but of many other gentlemen of Bologna, Parma, Modena, Florence, Rome, and Naples. I must mention with especial gratitude the Abate Mazza, Vice-Rector of the Pontifical Seminary, at Bologna; Cavaliere Angelo Pezzana, Librarian of the Ducal Library, at Parma; Cavaliere Cavedoni, Librarian of Modena; Professor Guasti at Florence; Padre Bresciani, the distinguished author of the "Ebreo di Verona," at Rome; the Rector and Vice-Rector of the Irish College, and the Rector and Vice-Rector of the English College in the same city; and Padre Vinditti of the Jesuit College at Naples. For some personal recollections of Mezzofanti and his early friends, and for other interesting information obtained from Bologna, I am indebted to Dr. Santagata, to Mgr. Trombetti, and to the kind offices of the learned Archbishop of Tarsus, Mgr. De Luca, Apostolic Nuncio at Munich.

street: and it chanced that the bench at which the boy was wont to work was situated directly opposite the window of a school kept by an old priest, who instructed a number of pupils in Latin and Greek. Although utterly unacquainted, not only with the Greek alphabet, but even with that of his own language, young Mezzofanti, overhearing the lessons which were taught in the school, caught up every Greek and Latin word that was explained in the several classes, without once having seen a Greek or Latin book! By some lucky accident the fact came to the knowledge of his unwitting instructor: it led of course to the withdrawal of the youth from the mechanical craft to which his father had destined him, and rescued him for the more congenial pursuit of literature.*

A still more marvellous tale is told by a popular American writer, Mr. Headley, whom his transatlantic admirers have styled the "Addison of America;" that while Mezzofanti "was still an obscure priest in the north of Italy, he was called one day to confess two foreigners condemned for piracy, who were to be executed next day. On entering their cell, he found them unable to understand a word he uttered. Overwhelmed with the thought that the criminals should leave the world without the benefits of religion, he returned to his room, resolved to acquire the lan-

* This anecdote was told to Cardinal Wiseman by the late Archdeacon Hare, as current in Bologna during the residence of his family in that city. The Archdeacon's brother, Mr. Francis Hare, was intimately acquainted with Mezzofanti during his early life, and was for some time his pupil.

guage before morning. He accomplished his task, and next day confessed them in their own tongue! From that time on, he had no trouble in mastering the most difficult language. The purity of his motive in the first instance, he thought, influenced the Deity to assist him miraculously."* This strange tale Mr. Headley relates, on the authority of a priest, a friend of Mezzofanti; and he goes so far as to say, that "Mezzofanti himself attributed his power of acquiring languages to the divine influence."†

The imagination might dwell with pleasure upon these and similar tales of wonder; but, happily for the moral lesson which it is the best privilege of biography to convey, the true history of the early studies of Mezzofanti, (although while falling far short of these marvels, it is too wonderful to be held out as a model even for the most aspiring) is, nevertheless, such as to show that the most gifted themselves can only hope to attain to true eminence by patient and systematic industry.

Far from being entirely neglected, as these tales would imply, Mezzofanti's education commenced at an unusually early period. His parents—

A virtuous household, but exceeding poor,

conscious of their own want of learning, appear, from the very first, to have bestowed upon the education of their son all the care which their narrow circumstances permitted According to an account

* Headley's "Letters from Italy," pp. 152-3.

† Ibid, p. 152.

obtained from the Cavaliere Minarelli, he was sent, while a mere child, not yet three years old, to a dame's school, more, it would seem, for security, than for actual instruction. Being deemed too young to be regularly taught, he was here left for a time to sit in quiet and amuse himself as best he could, while the other children were receiving instruction; but the mistress soon discovered that the child, although excluded from the lessons of his elders, had learned without any effort, all that had been communicated to them, and was able to repeat promptly and accurately the tasks which she had dictated. He was accordingly admitted to the regular classes; and, child as he was, passed rapidly through the various elementary branches of instruction, to which alone her humble school extended.

From this dame's school he was removed to the more advanced, but still elementary, school of the Abate Filippo Cicotti, in which he learned grammar, geography, writing, arithmetic, algebra, and the elements of Latin. But, after some time, the excellent priest who conducted this school, honestly advised the parents, young as was their boy, to remove him to another institution, and to permit him to apply himself unrestrainedly to the higher studies for which he was already fully qualified.

His father appears to have demurred for a while to this suggestion. Limiting his views in reference to the boy to the lowly sphere in which he himself had been born, he had only contemplated bestowing upon him a solid elementary education in the branches

of knowledge suited to its humble requirements; and, with the old-fashioned prejudices not uncommon in his rank, he was unwilling to sanction his son's entering upon what appeared to him an unnatural and unprofitable career, for one who was destined to earn his bread by a mechanical art. Fortunately, however, his wife entertained higher and more enlightened views for their child, and understood better his character and capabilities.

It was mainly, however, through the counsel and influence of a benevolent priest of the Oratory, Father John Baptist Respighi, that the career of the young Mezzofanti was decided. This excellent clergyman, to whom many deserving youths of his native city were indebted for assistance and patronage in their entrance into life, observed the rare talents of Mezzofanti, and, by his earnest advice, promptly overruled the hesitation of his father. At his recommendation, the boy was transferred from the school of the Abate Cicotti, to one of the so-called "Scuole Pie," of Bologna;—schools conducted by a religious congregation, which had been founded in the beginning of the seventeenth century, by Joseph Cazalana; and which, though originally intended chiefly for the more elementary branches of education, had also been directed with great success, (especially in the larger cities,) to the cultivation of the higher studies.

Among the clergymen who at this period devoted themselves to the service of the Scuole Pie, at Bologna, were several members of the recently suppressed

society of the Jesuits, not only of the Roman, but also of the Spanish and Spanish American provinces. The expulsion of the society from Spain had preceded by more than three years the general suppression of the order; and the Spanish members of the brotherhood, when exiled from their native country, had found a cordial welcome in the Papal states. Among these were several who were either foreigners by birth, or had long resided in the foreign missions of the society. To them all the Scuole Pie seemed to open a field of labour almost identical with that of their own institute. Many of them gladly embraced the opportunity; and it can hardly be doubted that the facility of learning a variety of languages, which this accidental union of instructors from so many different countries afforded, was, after his own natural bias, among the chief circumstances which determined the direction of the youthful studies of Mezzofanti.

One of these ex-Jesuits, Father Emanuel Aponte, a native of Spain, had been for many years a member of the mission of the Philippine Islands. Another, Father Mark Escobar, was a native of Guatemala, and had been employed in several of the Mexican and South American missions of the society. A third, Father Laurence Ignatius Thiulen, had passed through a still more remarkable career. He was a native of Gottenburg, in Sweden, where his father held the office of superintendent of the Swedish East India Company, and had been born (1746,) a Lutheran. Leaving home in early youth with the design of

improving himself by foreign travel, he spent some time in Lisbon, and afterwards in Cadiz, in 1768; whence, with the intention of proceeding to Italy, he embarked for the island of Corsica, in the same ship in which he had reached Lisbon from his native country. In the meantime, however, this ship had been chartered by the government as one of the fleet in which the Jesuit Fathers, on their sudden and mysterious suppression in Spain, were to be transported to Italy. By this unexpected accident, Thiulen became the fellow passenger of several of the exiled fathers. Trained from early youth to regard with suspicion and fear every member of that dreaded order, he at first avoided all intercourse with his Jesuit fellow passengers. By degrees, however, their unobtrusive, but ready courtesy, disarmed his suspicions. He became interested in their conversation, even when it occasionally turned upon religious topics. Serious inquiry succeeded; and in the end, before the voyage was concluded, his prejudices had been so far overcome, that he began to entertain the design of becoming a Catholic. After his landing in the Island of Corsica, many obstacles were thrown in his way by the Swedish consul at Bastia, himself a Lutheran; but Thiulen persevered, and was enabled eventually to carry his design into execution at Ferrara, in 1769. In the following year, 1770, he entered the Jesuit society at Bologna. He was here admitted to the simple vow in 1772. But he had hardly completed this important step, when the final suppression of the Order was proclaimed; and, although

both as a foreigner, and as being unprofessed, he had no claim to the slender pittance which was assigned for the support of the members, the peculiar circumstances of his case created an interest in his behalf. He was placed upon the same footing with the professed Fathers; and two years later, in 1776, he was promoted to the holy order of priesthood, and continued to reside in Bologna, engaged in teaching and in the duties of the ministry.*

These good Fathers, with that traditionary instinct which in their order has been the secret of their long admitted success in the education of youth, were not slow to discover the rare talents of their young scholar in the Scuole Pie. In a short time he appears to have become to them more a friend than a pupil. Two, at least, of the members, Fathers Aponte, and Thiulen, lived to witness the distinction of his later life, and with them, as well as with his first and kindest patron, Father Respighi, he ever continued to maintain the most friendly and affectionate relations.†

It would be interesting to be able to trace the exact history of this period of the studies of Mezzofanti, and to fix the dates and the order of his successive acquisitions in what afterwards became the engrossing

* He published a number of polemical and moral treatises, which are enumerated in the "Memorie di Religione," a journal published at Modena, Vol IV., pp. 456-61, where will also be found an interesting memoir of the author.

† Another name, Molina, is mentioned, as one of his early masters, in a rude poetical panegyric of the Cardinal, by an improvisatore named Giovanni Masocco :—"Per la illustre e sempre cara Memoria del Card. Giuseppe Mezzofanti," [Roma 1849]. But I have not learned any particulars regarding this Molina.

pursuit of his life. But, unfortunately, so few details can now be ascertained that it is difficult to distinguish his school life from that of an ordinary student. His chief teachers in the Scuole Pie appear to have been the ex-Jesuit Fathers already named; of whom Father Thiulen was his instructor in history, geography, arithmetic, and mathematics;* Father Aponte in Greek; and probably Father Escobar in Latin. As he certainly learned Spanish at an early period, it is not unlikely that he was indebted for it, too, to the instructions of one of these ecclesiastics, as also perhaps for some knowledge of the Mexican or Central American languages.

But although barren in details, all the accounts of his school-days concur in describing his uniform success in all his classes, and the extraordinary quickness of his memory. One of his feats of memory is recorded by M. Manavit.† A folio volume of the works of St. John Chrysostom being put into his hand, he was desired to read a page of the treatise "*De Sacerdotio*" in the original Greek. After a single reading, the volume was closed, and he repeated the entire page, without mistaking or displacing a single word! His manners and dispositions as a boy were exceedingly engaging; and the friendships which he formed at school continued uninterrupted during life. Among his school companions there is one who

* This at least was Thiulen's ordinary department. See the *Memorie di Religione*, already cited.

† *Esquisse Historique sur le Cardinal Mezzofanti. Par A. Manavit.* Paris, 1853, p. 15.

deserves to be especially recorded—the well-known naturalist, Abate Camillo Ranzani, for many years afterwards Mezzofanti's fellow-professor in the university. Ranzani, like his friend, was of very humble origin, and like him owed his withdrawal from obscurity to the enlightened benevolence of the good Oratorian, F. Respighi.* Young Ranzani was about the same age with Mezzofanti; and as their homes immediately adjoined each other,† they had been daily companions almost from infancy, and particularly from the time when they began to frequent the Scuole Pie in company. The constant allusions to Ranzani which occur in Mezzofanti's letters, will show how close and affectionate their intimacy continued to be.

Joseph Mezzofanti early manifested a desire to embrace the ecclesiastical profession; and although this wish seems to have caused some dissatisfaction to his father, who had intended him for some secular pursuit,‡ yet the deeply religious disposition of the child and his singular innocence of life, in the end overcame his father's reluctance. Having completed his elementary studies unusually early, he was enabled to become a scholar of the archiepiscopal seminary of Bologna, while still a mere boy, probably in the year 1786.§ He continued, however, to reside

* See the *Memorie di Religione*, vol. XV., where an interesting biography of the Abate Ranzani will be found.

† Manavit, "Esquisse Historique," p. 9.

‡ Ibid, p. 12.

§ Manavit assigns a much later date, 1791. But the short memoir by Signor Stoltz, [Biografia del Cardinal Mezzofanti; Scrit-

in his father's house, while he attended the schools of the seminary.

Of his collegiate career little is recorded, except an incident which occurred at the taking of his degree in philosophy. His master in this study was Joseph Voglio, a professor of considerable reputation, and author of several works on the philosophical controversies of the period.* It is usual in the Italian universities for the candidate for a philosophical degree, to defend publicly a series of propositions selected from the whole body of philosophy. Mezzofanti, at the time that he maintained his theses, was still little more than a child; and it would seem that, his self-possession having given way under the public ordeal, he had a narrow escape from the mortification of a complete failure. One of the witnes-

ta dall' Avvocato G. Stoltz, Roma 1851,] founded upon information supplied by the Cardinal's family, which states that he had completed his philosophy when he was but fifteen, (p. 6,) is much more reconcilable with facts otherwise ascertained. His philosophical course occupied three years. (See *De Josepho Mezzofantio, Sermones Duo auctore Ant. Santagata,* published in the acts of the Institute of Bologna, vol. V. p. 169, et seq.) His theological course (probably of four,) was completed in 1796, or at farthest early in 1797. This would clearly have been impossible in the interval assigned by Manavit.

* One of these, *Reflessioni sul Manuale dei Teofilantropi,* is directed against the singular half-religious, half-social confederation, entitled "Theophilanthropists," founded in 1795, by La Reveillere-Lepéaux, one of the directors of the French Republic. These treatises are noticed in the *Memorie di Religione,* 1822, 1823, and 1824. Joseph Voglio is not to be confounded with the physiologist of the same name, (John Hyacinth,) who was also professor in Bologna, but in the previous generation.

ses of his "Disputation," Dr. Santagata, in the Discourse already referred to, delivered at the Institute of Bologna, gives an interesting account of the occurrence. "For a time," says Dr. Santagata, "the boy's success was most marked. Each new objection, among the many subtle ones that were proposed, only afforded him a fresh opportunity of exhibiting the acuteness of his intellect, and the ease, fluency, and elegance of his Latinity; and the admiring murmurs of assent, and other unequivocal tokens of applause which it elicited from the audience, of which I myself was one, seemed to promise a triumphant conclusion of the exercise. But all at once the young candidate was observed to grow pale, to become suddenly silent, and at length to fall back upon his seat and almost faint away. The auditors were deeply grieved at this untoward interruption of a performance hitherto so successful; but they were soon relieved to see him, as if by one powerful effort, shake off his emotion, recover his self-possession, and resume his answering with even greater acuteness and solidity than before. He was greeted with the loud and repeated plaudits of the crowded assembly."*

About this period, soon after Mezzofanti had completed his fifteenth year, his health gave way under this long and intense application; and his constitution for a time was so debilitated, that, at the termination of his course of philosophy, he was compelled to interrupt his studies;† nor was it until about

* "De Josepho Mezzofantio Sermones Duo," p. 172.

† Manavit, p. 13.

1793, that he entered upon the theological course, under the direction of the Canon Joachim Ambrosi. One of his class-fellows, the Abate Monti, the venerable arch-priest of Bagni di Poreta, in the archdiocese of Bologna, still survives and speaks in high terms of the ability which he exhibited. He describes him as a youth of most engaging manners and amiable dispositions—one who, from his habitually serious and recollected air, might perhaps be noted by strangers

> For his grave looks, too thoughtful for his years,

but who, to his friends, was all gaiety and innocent mirthfulness. Mgr. Monti adds that he was at this time a most laborious student, frequently remaining up whole nights in the library for the purpose of study. His master in moral theology was the Canonico Baccialli, author of a *Corpus Theologiæ Moralis*, of some local reputation.

Having completed the course of theology, and also that of canon law, he attended the lectures of the celebrated Jurist, Bonini, on Roman Law. The great body of the students of the school of Roman Law being laymen, the young ecclesiastic remained a considerable time unobserved and undistinguished in the class; until, having accidentally attracted the notice of the professor on one occasion, he replied with such promptness and learning to a question which he addressed to him, as at once to establish a reputation; and Dr. Santagata, who records the circumstance,* observes that his proficiency in each of his many different studies was almost as great as

* Santagata's "Sermones Duo," p. 173.

though he had devoted his undivided attention to that particular pursuit.

Meanwhile, however, he continued without interruption, what, even thus early in his career, was his chosen study of languages. Under the direction of Father Aponte, now rather his friend and associate than instructor in the study, he pursued his Greek reading; and as this had been from the first one of his favourite languages, there were few Greek authors within his reach that he did not eagerly read. Fortunately, too, Aponte was himself an enthusiast in the study of Greek, and possessed a solid and critical knowledge of the language, of which he had written an excellent and practical grammar for the schools of the university, frequently republished since his time;* and it was probably to the habit of close and critical examination which he acquired under Aponte's instruction, that Mezzofanti owed the exact knowledge of the niceties of the language, and the power of discriminating between all the varieties of Greek style, for which, as we shall see later, he was eminently distinguished.

One of his fellow pupils in Greek under Aponte was the celebrated Clotilda Tambroni, whom I have already mentioned in the list of lady-linguists, and whose name is the last in the catalogue of lady-professors at Bologna. A community of tastes as well as of studies formed a close bond of intimacy between her and Mezzofanti, and led to an affectionate and

* Elementi della Lingua Greca, pel uso delle Scuole di Bologna. Bologna 1807.

lasting friendship in after life. To Aponte she was as a daughter.*

His master in Hebrew was the Dominican Father Ceruti, a learned Orientalist and professor of that language in the university. About the same time also, he must have become acquainted with Arabic, a language for the study of which Bologna had early acquired a reputation. And, what is a still more unequivocal exhibition of his early enthusiasm, although Coptic formed no part of the circle of university studies, Görres states that he learned this language also under the Canon John Lewis Mingarelli.† If this account be true, as Mingarelli died in March 1793, Mezzofanti must have acquired Coptic before he had completed his nineteenth year.

Nor did he meanwhile neglect the modern languages. About the year 1792, a French ecclesiastic a native of Blois, one of those whom the successive decrees of the Constituent Assembly had driven into exile, came to reside in Bologna. From him Mezzofanti speedily acquired French.‡ He received his first lessons in German from F. Thiulen,§ who

* See Kephalides "Reise durch Italien und Sicilien." Vol. I. p. 29.

† See two interesting articles in the "Historisch-Politische Blätter," vol. X. p, 200, and folio. The writer was the younger Görres, (Guido,) son of the well-known professor of that name. Most of his information as to the early life of Mezzofanti was derived from the Cardinal himself, with whom, during a long sojourn in Rome, in 1841-2, he formed a very close and intimate friendship, and in company with whom he studied the Basque language, I have spoken of Mingarelli in a former page.

‡ Manavit, p. 17.

§ Santagata, p. 171.

had been one of his masters in the Scuole Pie ; and who, although a Swede by birth, was acquainted with the cognate language of Germany. From him, too, most probably, Mezzofanti would also have learned his native Swedish , but, on the occupation of northern Italy by the French, F. Thiulen, who had made himself obnoxious to the revolutionary party in Bologna, by his writings in favour of the Papal authority, had been arrested and sent into exile.* Perhaps Thiulen's absence from Bologna was the occasion of calling into exercise that marvelous quickness in mastering the structure of a new language, which often, during Mezzofanti's later career, excited the amazement even of his most familiar friends. At all events, the first occasion of his exhibiting this singular faculty of which I have been able to discover any authentic record, is the following :—

A Bolognese musician, named Uttini, had settled at Stockholm, where he married a Swedish lady. Uttini, it would seem, died early ; but his brother, Caspar Uttini, a physician of Bologna, undertook the education of his son, who was sent to Bologna for the purpose. The boy, at his arrival, was not only entirely ignorant of Italian, but could not speak a word of any language except his native Swedish. In this emergency Mezzofanti, who, although still a student, had already acquired the reputation of a linguist, was sent for, to act as interpreter between the boy and his newly found relatives: but it turned out that the language of the boy was, as yet, no

* "Memorie di Religione," vol. IV., p. 450.

less a mystery to Mezzofanti than it had already proved to themselves. This discovery, so embarrassing to the family, served but to stimulate the zeal of Mezzofanti. Having made a few ineffectual attempts to establish an understanding, he asked to see the books which the boy had brought with him from his native country. A short examination of these books was sufficient for his rapid mind; he speedily discovered the German affinities of the Swedish language, and mastered almost at a glance the leading peculiarities of form, structure, and inflexion, by which it is distinguished from the other members of the Teutonic family; a few short trials with the boy enabled him to acquire the more prominent principles of pronunciation; and in the space of a few days, he was able, not only to act as the boy's interpreter with his family, but to converse with the most perfect freedom and fluency in the language!*

Mezzofanti received the clerical tonsure in the year 1795. In 1796 he was admitted to the minor orders; and, on the 24th of September in the same year, to the order of sub-deacon. On the first of April, 1797, he was promoted to deaconship; and a few months later he was advanced, on September 24th, 1797, to the holy order of priesthood.† At this

* Santagata "De Josepho Mezzofantio," p. 185. "Applausi dei Filopieri," p. 12-3. Mezzofanti was more fortunate in this experiment than the Frenchman mentioned in Moore's "Diary," (vol. VI., p. 190,) who, after he had taken infinite pains to learn a language which he *believed to be Swedish*, discovered, at the end of his studies, that the language which he had acquired with so much labour was *Bas-Breton*.

† M. Manavit (p. 19,) says, that he was at this time *twenty-*

time he had only just completed his twenty-third year.

This anticipation of the age at which priesthood is usually conferred, was probably owing to an appointment which he had just received (on the 15th of September,)* in the university—that of professor of Arabic. Such an appointment at this unprecedented age, is the highest testimony which could be rendered to his capacity as a general scholar, as well as to his eminence as a linguist.

He commenced his lectures on the 15th of the following December. Dr. Santagata, who was a student of the university at the time, speaks very favourably of his opening lecture, not only for its learning and solidity, but also for the beauty of its style, and its lucid and pleasing arrangement.†

Unhappily his tenure of the Arabic professorship was a very brief duration. The political relations of Bologna had just undergone a complete revolution. Early in 1796, very soon after the advance of the French army into Italy, Bonaparte had

two years old. But this is an error of a full year. He was born on the 17th September, 1774; and therefore, before September 24th, 1797, had completed his twenty-third year. M. Manavit was probably misled by the dispensation in age which was obtained for him. But it must be recollected that such dispensation is required for all candidates for priesthood under *twenty-four years* complete.

* This date, and the others relating to his university career, have (through the kindness of the Nuncio at Munich, Mgr. De Luca,) been extracted for me from an autograph note, deposited by Mezzofanti himself in the archives of the university of Bologna, on the 25th of April, 1815.

† Santagata, Sermones, p. 190.

been invited by a discontented party in Bologna to take possession of their city, and, in conjuction with Saliceti, had occupied the fortresses on the 19th of January. At first after the French occupation, the Bolognese were flattered by a revival of their old muncipal institutions ; but before the close of 1796, the name of Bologna was merged in the common designation of the Cisalpine Republic, by which all the French conquests in Northern Italy were described. By the treaty of Tolentino, concluded in February, 1797, the Pope was compelled formally to cede to this new Cisalpine Republic, the three Legations of Bologna, Ferara, and Romagna ; and, in the subsequent organization of the new territory, Bologna became the capital of the Dipartimento del Reno.

One of the first steps of the new rulers was to require of all employés an oath of fidelity to the Republic. The demand was enforced with great strictness ; and especially in the case of ecclesiastics, who in Italy, as in France, were naturally regarded with still greater suspicion by the Republican authorities, than even those civil servants of the old government who had been most distinguished for their loyalty. Nevertheless the republican authorities themselves consented that an exception should be made in favour of a scholar of such promise as the Abate Mezzofanti. The oath was proposed to him, as to the rest of the professors. He firmly refused to take it. In other cases deprivation had been the immediate consequence of such refusal ; but an effort was made to shake the firmness of Mezzofanti, and even to induce him without formally accepting the oath, to signify his

compliance by some seeming act of adhesion to the established order of things. An intimation accordingly was conveyed to him, that in his case the oath would be dispensed with, and that he would be allowed to retain his chair, if he would only consent to make known by any overt act whatsoever, (even by a mere interchange of courtesies with some of the officials of the Republic,) his acceptance of its authority as now established.* But Mezzofanti was at once too conscientious to compromise what he conceived to be his duty towards his natural sovereign, and too honourable to affect, by such unworthy temporizing, a disposition which he did not, and could not, honestly entertain. He declined even to appear as a visitor in the salons of the new governor. He was accordingly deprived of his professorship in the year 1798.

He was not alone in this generous fidelity. His friend Signora Tambroni displayed equal firmness. It is less generally known that the distinguished experimentalist, Ludovico Galvani,† was a martyr in the same cause. Like Mezzofanti, on refusing the oath, he was stripped of all his offices and emoluments. Less fortunate than Mezzofanti, he sunk under the stroke. He was plunged into the deepest distress and debility; and, although his Republican rulers were at length driven by shame to decree his restoration to his chair, the reparation came too late. He died in 1798.

* Manavit, p. 28.

† Whewell's Inductive Sciences, III. p. 86.

CHAPTER II.

[1798-1802.]

THE years which followed this forfeiture of his professorship were a period of much care, as well as of severe personal privation, for the Abate Mezzofanti.

Both his parents were still living;—his father no longer able to maintain himself by his handicraft; his mother for some years afflicted with partial blindness, and in broken or failing health. The family of his sister, Teresa Minarelli, had already become very numerous, and the scanty earnings of her husband's occupation hardly sufficed for their maintenance, much less for the expenses of their education. In addition, therefore, to his own necessities, Joseph Mezzofanti was now in great measure burdened with this twofold responsibility—a responsibility to which so affectionate a brother, and so dutiful a son could not be indifferent. To meet these demands, he had hitherto relied mainly upon the income arising from his professorship, although this was miserably inade-

quate, the salaries attached to the professorships in Bologna, at the time when Lalande visited Italy, (1765-6,) not exceeding a hundred Roman crowns, (little more than £25). Small, however, as it was, this salary was Mezzofanti's main source of income. As a title to ordination, the archbishop of Bologna, Cardinal Giovanetti, had conferred upon him two small benefices, the united revenues of which, strange as it may sound in English ears, did not exceed eight pounds sterling ;* and an excellent ecclesiastic, F. Anthony Magnani, who had long known and appreciated the virtues of the family, and had taken a warm interest in Joseph from his boyhood, settled upon him from his own private resources about the same amount. Now, as Mezzofanti had devoted himself to literature, and lived as a simple priest at Bologna, declining to accept any preferment to which the care of souls was annexed, this wretched pittance constituted his entire income. It is true that he was about this period chaplain of the Collegio Albornoz,† an ancient Spanish foundation of the great Cardinal of that name ;‡ but his services appear either to have been entirely gratuitous, or the emolument, if any, was little more than nominal.

And thus, when the Abate Mezzofanti, relying

* Manzvit, p. 19.

† Ibid, p. 29.

‡ The learned and munificent Egidio Albornoz, whom English readers probably know solely from the revolting picture in Bulwer's "Rienzi." The Albornoz College was founded in pursuance of his will, in 1377, with an endowment for twenty-four Spanish students, and two chaplains. See Tiraboschi "Letteratura Italiana," V. p. 58.

upon Providence, had the courage to throw up, for conscience sake, the salary which constituted nearly two-thirds of his entire revenue, he found himself burdened with the responsibilities already described, while his entire certain income was considerably less than twenty pounds sterling! Nevertheless, gloomy and disheartening as was this prospect, far from suffering himself to be cast down by it, he was even courageous enough to venture, about this time, on the further responsibility of receiving his sister and her family into his own house. The renewal of hostilities in Italy, in 1799, filled him with alarm for her security; and his nephew, Cavaliere Minarelli, who has been good enough to communicate to me a short MS. Memoir of the events of this period of his uncle's life, still remembers the day on which, while the French and Austrian troops were actually engaged before the walls, and the shot and shells had already begun to fall within the city, his uncle came to their house, at considerable personal risk, and insisted that his sister and her children should remove to his own house which was in a less exposed position. From that date (1799) they continued to reside with him.

To meet this increased expenditure, the Abate's only resource lay in that wearisome and ill-requited drudgery in which the best years of struggling genius are so often frittered away—private instruction. He undertook the humble, but responsible, duties of private tutor, and turned industriously, if not very profitably, to account, the numerous acquisitions of his early years. There are few of the distinguished

families of Bologna, some of whose members were not among his pupils—the Marescalchi, Pallavicini, Ercolani, Martinetti, Bentivoglio, Marsigli, Sampieri, Angelelli, Marchetti, and others. To these, as well as to several foreigners, he gave instructions in ancient and modern languages, to some in his own apartments, but more generally in their houses.

As regarded his own personal improvement in learning, these engagements, of course, were, for the most part, a wasteful expenditure of time and opportunities for study ; but there was one of them—that with the Marescalchi family*—which supplied in the end an occasion for extending and improving his knowledge of languages. The library of the Marescalchi palace is especially rich in that department ; and, as the modest and engaging manners of Mezzofanti quickly established him on the footing of a valued friend, rather than of an instructor, in the family, he enjoyed unrestricted use of the opportunities for his own peculiar studies which it afforded. In this family, too, one of the most ancient and distinguished in Bologna, he had frequent opportunities of meeting and conversing with foreigners, each in the language of his own country.

At all events, whatever may have been his actual opportunities of study during the years which succeeded his deprivation, it is certain that, upon the whole, his progress during that time was not less wonderful than at the most favoured periods of his

* Görres, in the Histor. Polit. Blätter, X. p. 203.

life. Northern Italy, during this troubled time, was the principal seat of the struggle between Austria and the French Republic ; and from the first advance of the French in 1796, till the decisive field of Marengo in 1800, Bologna found itself alternately in the occupation of one or other of the contending powers. For nearly twelve months, however, after the battle of Trebbia, in July, 1799, the Austrians remained in undisturbed possession. The army of Austria at that day comprised in its motley ranks, representatives of most of the leading European languages—Teutonic, Slavonic, Czechish, Magyar, Romanic, &c. The intercourse with the officers and soldiery thus opened for Mezzofanti, in itself supplied a school of languages, which, taken in conjunction with the university, and its other resources, it would have been difficult to find in any other single European city, except Rome.

And these advantages presented themselves to the Abate Mezzofanti, since his advancement to the priesthood, in a way which enlisted still higher feelings than that desire for knowledge which had hitherto formed his main incentive to study.

All the accounts which have been preserved of the early years of his ministry, concur in extolling his remarkable piety, his devotedness to the duties of the confessional,* and above all his active and tender charity. He had a share in every work of benevolence. He loved to organize little plans for the education of the poor. Notwithstanding his numerous and pressing

* Manavit, p. 21.

occupations, he was a constant visitant of the numerous charitable institutions for which Bologna, even among the munificent cities of Italy, has long been celebrated. He was particularly devoted to the sick;—not only to the class who are called in Italy "the bashful poor," whom he loved to seek out and visit at their own houses, and to whom, poor as he was in worldly wealth, his active benevolence enabled him to render services which money could not have procured;—but also in the public hospitals, both civil and military. Now the terrible campaign of 1796-'97, and again of 1799, had filled the camps of both armies with sick and wounded soldiers; and thus in the public hospitals of Bologna were constantly to be found invalids of almost every European race. M. Manavit* states that, even before Mezzofanti was ordained priest, he had begun to act as interpreter to the wounded or dying in the hospitals, whether of their temporal or their spiritual wants and wishes. From the date of his ordination, of course, he was moved to the same service by a zeal still higher and more holy.

"I was at Bologna," he himself told M. Manavit,† "during the time of the war. I was then young in the sacred ministry; it was my practice to visit the military hospitals. I constantly met there Hungarians, Slavonians, Germans, and Bohemians, who had been wounded in battle, or invalided during the campaign; it and pained me to the heart that from

* Manavit, p. 23.
† Ibid, pp. 104-5.

want of the means of communicating with them, I was unable to confess those among them who were Catholics, or to bring back to the Church those who were separated from her communion. In such cases, accordingly, I used to apply myself, with all my energy, to the study of the language of the patients, until I knew enough of them to make myself understood; I required no more. With these first rudiments I presented myself among the sick wards. Such of the invalids as desired it, I managed to confess; with others I held occasional conversations; and thus in a short time I acquired a considerable vocabulary. At length, through the grace of God, assisted by my private studies, and by a retentive memory, I came to know, not merely the generic languages of the nations to which the several invalids belonged, but even the peculiar dialects of their various provinces."

In this way, being already well acquainted with German, he became master successively of Magyar, Bohemian, or Czechish, Polish, and even of the Gipsy dialect, which he learned from one of that strange race, who was a soldier in a Hungarian regiment quartered at Bologna during this period.* It is probable, too, that it was in the same manner he also learned Russian. It is at least certain that he was able to speak that language fluently, at the date of his acquaintance with the celebrated Suwarrow. Mezzofanti's report of the acquirements of this "remarkable barbarian" differs widely from the notion then

* Zach's Correspondance Astronomique," vol. IV. p. 192.

popularly entertained regarding him. He described him as a most accomplished linguist, and a well-read scholar. This report, it may be added, is fully confirmed by the most recent authorities, and Alison describes him as "highly educated, polished in his manners, speaking and writing seven languages with facility, and extensively read, especially upon the art of war."*

It was about this time also that Mezzofanti learned Flemish. He acquired that language from a youth of Brussels, who came as a student to the University of Bologna.†

The reputation which he was thus gradually establishing, of itself served to extend his opportunities of exercise in languages. Every foreigner who visited Bologna sought his society for the purpose of testing personally the truth of the marvelous reports which had been circulation. In these days Bologna was the high road to Rome, and few visitors to that capital failed to tarry for a short time at Bologna, to examine the many objects of interest which it contains. To all of these Mezzofanti found a ready and welcome access. There were few with whom his fertile vocabulary did not supply some medium of communication; but, even when the stranger could not speak any except the unknown tongue, Mezzofanti's ready ingenuity soon enabled him, as with the patients in the hospital, to establish a system for the

* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. IV. p. 241, (fifth edition).

† Wap's Mijne Reis naar Rome, in het Voorjaar van 1837. 2 vols. 8vo, Breda, 1838, II. p. 28.

interchange of thought. A very small number of leading words sufficed as a foundation; and the almost instinctive facility with which, by a single effort, he grasped all the principal peculiarities of the structure of each new language, speedily enabled him to acquire enough of the essential inflections of each to enter on the preliminaries of conversation. For his marvelous instinct of acquisitiveness this was enough. The iron tenacity of his memory never let go a word, a phrase, an idiom, or even a sound, which it once had mastered.

In his zeal for the extension of the circle of his knowledge of languages, too, he pushed to the utmost the valuable opportunities derivable from the converse of foreigners. "The hotel-keepers," he told M. Manavit,* "were in the habit of apprising me of the arrival of all strangers at Bologna. I made no difficulty when anything was to be learned, about calling on them, interrogating them, making notes of their communications, and taking instructions from them in the pronunciation of their respective languages. A few learned Jesuits, and several Spaniards, Portuguese, and Mexicans, who resided at Bologna, afforded me valuable aid in learning both the ancient languages, and those of their own countries. I made it a rule to learn every new grammar, and to apply myself to every strange dictionary that came within my reach. I was constantly filling my head with new words; and, whenever any new strangers, whether of high or low degree, passed through

* p. 105.

Bologna, I endeavoured to turn them to account, using the one for the purpose of perfecting my pronunciation, and the other for that of learning the familiar words and turns of expression. I must confess, too, that it cost me but little trouble; for, in addition to an excellent memory, God had blessed me with an incredible flexibility of the organs of speech."

Occasionally, too, he received applications from merchants, bankers, and even private individuals, to translate for them portions of their foreign correspondence which chanced to be written in some of the languages of less ordinary occurrence. In all such cases, Dr. Santagata* says, Mezzofanti was the unfailing resource; and his good nature was as ready as his knowledge was universal. He cheerfully rendered to every applicant every such assistance; and it was his invariable rule never to accept any remuneration whatsoever for this or any similar service.†

Even his regular priestly duties as a confessor now contributed, as his extraordinary duties in the hospitals had done before, to enlarge his stock of languages. He was soon marked out as the "foreigners' confessor" *(confessario dei forestieri)* of Bologna, an office which, in Rome and other Catholic cities, is generally entrusted to a staff consisting of many individuals. Almost every foreigner was sure to find a ready resource in Mezzofanti; though it more than once happened that, as a preliminary step towards receiving the

* Santagata "Sermones," p. 189.
† Ibid, p. 189.

confession of the party applying for this office of his ministry, he had to place himself as a pupil in the hands of the intending penitent, and to acquire from him or her the rudiments of the language in which they were to communicate with each other. The process to him was simple enough. If the stranger was able to repeat for him the Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, or any one of those familiar prayers which are the common property of all Christian countries, or even to supply the names of a few of the leading ideas of Christian theology, as God, sin, virtue, earth, heaven, hell, &c., it was sufficient for Mezzofanti. In many cases he proceeded to build, upon a foundation not a whit more substantial than this, the whole fabric of the grammar, and to a great extent even of the vocabulary, of a language. A remarkable instance of this faculty I shall have to relate in the later years of his life. Another, which belongs to the present period, has been communicated to me by Cardinal Wiseman. "Mezzofanti told me," says his Eminence, "that a lady from the island of Sardinia once came to Bologna, bringing with her a maid who could speak nothing but the Sardinian dialect, a soft patois composed of Latin, Italian, and Spanish (e.g., Mezzofanti told me that *columba mia* is Sardinian for "my wife.") As Easter approached the girl became anxious and unhappy about confession, despairing of finding a confessor to whom she should be able to make herself understood. The lady sent for Mezzofanti; but at that time he had never thought of learning the language. He told the lady,

nevertheless, that, in a fortnight, he would be prepared to hear her maid's confession. She laughed at the idea; but Mezzofanti persisted, and came to the house every evening for about an hour. When Easter arrived, he was able to speak Sardinian fluently, and heard the girl's confession!"

It might be instructive to trace the order in which the several languages which he mastered in this earlier part of his career were successively acquired. But unfortunately neither the papers and letters which have been preserved, nor the recollections of the few friends who have survived, have thrown much light upon this interesting inquiry. All accounts, however, agree in representing his life during these years as laborious almost beyond belief. The weary hours occupied in the drudgery of tuition; the time given to the manifold self-imposed occupations described in this chapter; the time spent in the ordinary devotional exercises of a priest, and in the performance of those duties of the ministry in the hospitals and elsewhere which he had undertaken; above all, the time regularly and perseveringly given to his great and all-engrossing study of languages;—may well be thought to form an aggregate of laborious application hardly surpassed in the whole range of literary history. It fully confirms the well-known assurance of the noble Prologue of Bacon's "Advancement of Learning:" "Let no man doubt that learning will expulse business, but rather it will keep and defend the possession of the mind against idleness and pleasure, which otherwise may enter at unawares to the prejudice of

both." Other students may perhaps have devoted a longer time to continuous application. The celebrated Jesuit theologian, Father Suarez, is said to have spent seventeen hours out of the twenty-four between his studies and his devotions. Castell, the author of the Heptaglot Lexicon, declares, in the feeling address which accompanied its publication, that his thankless and unrequited task had occupied him for sixteen or eighteen hours every day during twenty years.* Theophilus Raynaud, during his long life of eighty years, only allowed himself a quarter of an hour daily from his studies for dinner ;† and the Puritan divine, Prynne, seldom would spare time to dine at all.‡ It may be doubted whether the actual labour of Mezzofanti, broken up and divided over so many almost incompatible occupations, did not equal and perhaps exceed them all in amount, if not in intensity. According to the account of Guido Görres,§ his time for sleep, during this period of his life, was limited to three hours.‖ His self-denial in all other

* Lexicon Heptaglotton, Preface.

† Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature, p. 372.

‡ Ibid, 369.

§ Historisch-Polit. Blatter, Vol. X., p. 204.

‖ It would be curious to collect the opinions of scholars upon the amount of time which may profitably be devoted to study. Some students, like those named above, and others who might easily have been added;—as the celebrated Père Hardouin; or the ill-fated Robert Heron, who died in Newgate in 1807, and who for many years had spent from twelve to sixteen hours a day at his desk [Disraeli, p. 84];—place no limit to the time of study beyond that of the student's physical powers of endurance. On the other hand, Sir Matthew Hale (see Southey's Life, IV., 357) said that six hours a day were as much as any student could usefully bear; and even

respects was almost equally wonderful. He was singularly abstemious both in eating and in drinking; and his power of enduring the intense cold which prevails in the winter months throughout the whole of Northern Italy, especially in the vicinity of the Apennines, was a source of wonder even to his own family. During the long nights which he devoted to study he never, even in the coldest weather, permitted himself the indulgence of a fire.

I may here mention that he continued the same practice to the end of his life. Even after his elevation to the cardinalate, he could hardly ever be induced to have recourse to a fire, or even to the little portable brazier, called *scaldino*, which students in Italy commonly employ, as a resource against the numbness of the feet and hands produced by the dry but piercing cold which characterizes the Italian winter.

Lord Coke was fully satisfied with eight. Much, of course, must depend on the individual constitution; but of the two opinions the latter is certainly nearer the truth.

CHAPTER III.

[1803-1806.]

FROM the commencement of 1803, those difficulties of the Abate Mezzofanti's position, which merely arose from the straitness of his income, began gradually to diminish. On the 29th of January in that year he was appointed assistant librarian of the *Istituto* of Bologna; one of those munificent literary institutions of which Italy is so justly proud, founded in the end of the seventeenth century by the celebrated General Count Marsigli, and enriched by the munificence of many successive scholars and citizens of Bologna; especially of the great Bolognese Pope, Benedict XIV. Its collections and museums are among the finest in Italy; and the library contains above a hundred and fifty thousand volumes.

But whatever of pecuniary advantage he derived from this appointment, was perhaps more than counterbalanced by the constant demand upon his time from the charge of so extensive a library: especially as

he confesses that, up to that period, he had seldom bestowed a thought on the study of bibliography. To add to the ordinary engagements of librarian, too, it was determined, sometime after Mezzofanti's appointment, to prepare a Catalogue Raisonné, in which the Oriental and Greek department naturally fell to his share. For the Oriental department of the library there seems, up to this time, to have been no catalogue, or at least an exceedingly imperfect and inaccurate one; and as a definite time was fixed for the completion of the task, it became for Mezzofanti a source of serious and protracted embarrassment, to which he alludes more than once in his correspondence.

A more congenial occupation, however, was offered to him soon afterwards. In the end of the same year, he was restored to his former position in the university. On the 4th of November in that year, he was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages;—a place which he was enabled to hold in conjunction with his office in the Library of the Institute.

A few months after his installation, he read at the university, June 23rd, 1804, on the occasion of conferring degrees, the first public dissertation of which I have been able to discover any record. The subject was "The Egyptian Obelisks." The dissertation itself has been lost; but Count Simone Stratico, of Pavia, to whom we owe the notice of its delivery, speaks of it as "most judicious and learned," and replete with antiquarian erudition.*

* In "Lettere di Varii illustri Itali, del Secolo XVII., e del Secolo XVIII." Vol. III., p. 183. Count Stratico is the well-known mathematician, the friend and colleague of Volta in the University of Pavia.

The Oriental Professorship in the neighbouring University of Parma, was at this time held by the celebrated John Bernard de Rossi. Mezzofanti had long desired to form the acquaintance of this distinguished Orientalist; and more than once projected a visit to Parma, for the purpose of placing himself in communication with him on the subject of his favourite study. His duties as assistant Librarian at length afforded the desired opportunity. Having occasion to order some of De Rossi's works from Parma, he addressed to De Rossi himself a letter which soon led to a warm and intimate friendship, and was the commencement of an interesting, although not very frequent, correspondence, which continued, at irregular intervals, up to the time of De Rossi's death. Some of Mezzofanti's letters to De Rossi, which are preserved in the Library of Parma, have been kindly placed at my disposal. They are chiefly interesting as throwing some light on the progress of his studies.

The first is dated September 15th, 1804—

To the Abate John Bernard de Rossi, Professor of Oriental Languages.

Bologna, September 15, 1804.

Most illustrious Signor Abate.—I have long admired and profited by your rare acquirements, which your learned works have made known all over Europe; and I have, for some time, been projecting a visit to Parma, for the double purpose of tendering to you a personal assurance of my esteem, and of examining your far-famed library. Finding my hope disappointed for the present, I take advantage of a favourable opportunity to offer you, at least in writing, some expression of the profound respect

which I feel for one so distinguished in the same studies which I myself pursue with great ardour, although with very inferior success. I am desirous also to procure those of your works marked nos. 22, 24, 25, and 26, in the catalogue kindly forwarded by you through Professor Ranzani. Pray give to the bearer of this letter any of the above numbers which may be in readiness: he will immediately settle for them.

May I venture to hope that, for the future, you will allow me, when any difficulty occurs to me in my Oriental reading, to have recourse to your profound knowledge of Oriental literature, and also that you will accept the sincere assurance of the esteem with which I declare myself

Your most humbl eand devotedservant

D. Joseph Mezzofanti,

Professor of Oriental Languages.

De Rossi replied by an exceedingly courteous letter, accompanied by a present of several books connected with Oriental literature, and manifesting so friendly an interest in the studies of his young correspondent, that Mezzofanti never afterwards hesitated to consult him when occasion arose. Their letters, in accordance with the ceremonious etiquette which characterizes all the correspondence of that period, are somewhat stiff and formal; but their intercourse was marked throughout by an active and almost tender interest upon the one side, and a respectful but yet affectionate admiration upon the other.

Meanwhile, however, Mezzofanti's own increasing reputation led to his being frequently consulted upon difficulties of the same kind. On one of these—a book in some unknown character which had been sent for his examination by Monsignor Bevilacqua,

a learned prelate at Ferrara—he, in his turn, consults De Rossi. His letter is chiefly curious as showing (what will appear strange to our modern philologers) that up to this date Mezzofanti was entirely unacquainted with Sanscrit. The importance of that language and the wide range of its relations, which Frederic Schlegel was almost the first to estimate aright, were not at this time fully appreciated.

To Professor Ab. John Bernard De Rossi.

Bologna, February 4, 1805.

The works which I lately received from you have only served to confirm the estimate of your powers which I had formed from those with which I was previously acquainted; while the obliging letter and valuable present which acccompanied them, equally convinced me of the kindness of your heart. May I hope that this kindness, as well as your profound erudition, may establish for me a title to claim the permission which I solicited in my last letter? I venture, therefore, to enclose to you a printed page in unknown characters, which the owner of the original, Mgr. Alessandro Bevilacqua of Ferrara, tells me has been already examined by several savants, but to no purpose. The book comes originally from Congo;* having been brought thence to Ferrara by a Capuchin of the same respectable family. Being full of the idea of Sanscrit, to which I earnestly long to apply myself as soon as I shall find means for the study, I was at first inclined to suspect that this might be the Sanscrit character; but this is a mere fancy of mine, or at best a guess. I look, therefore, to your more extensive knowledge for a satisfactory solution of the doubt; and meanwhile pray you to accept the assurance of my sincere gratitude and esteem.

This correspondence with De Rossi, also, shows very remarkably that, however, at a later period of

* A Mission had existed in Congo since the end of the fifteenth century.

his career, Mezzofanti's wonderful faculty of language may have been sharpened by practice into what appears almost an instinct, his method of study at this time was exact, laborious, and perhaps even plodding. He appears, from the very first, to have pursued as a means of study that system of written composition which was the amusement of his later years; and he occasionally availed himself of De Rossi's superior knowledge and experience so far as to submit these compositions for his judgment and correction.

It is to one of these he alludes in the following letter :—

Bologna, April 15, 1805.

I send you a translation in twelve languages of a short Latin sentence, in the hope that you will kindly correct any mistakes into which I may have fallen. I have been obliged to write it almost impromptu *(su due piedi)*. I mention this, however, not to excuse my own blunders, but to throw the blame of them on those who have forced me to the task. Not having a single individual within reach with whom to take counsel, I have been obliged to impose this trouble upon one whose kind courtesy will make it seem light to him. Accept my thanks in anticipation of your compliance.

P. S. I should feel obliged if you could let me have your observations by return of post. Pray attribute this, perhaps excessive, liberty to the peculiar circumstances in which I am placed.

I have in vain endeavoured to ascertain what were the twelve languages of this curious essay. As no trace of the copy is now to be found among De Rossi's papers, it seems probable that De Rossi, in complying with the request contained in the letter, returned the

paper to the writer with his own corrections. But whatever these "twelve languages" may have been, it is certain that, even at the date of this letter, Mezzofanti's attainments were by no means confined to that limit. My attention has been called to a notice of him contained in a curious, though little-known work, published at Milan in 1806,* which describes his range of languages as far more extensive.

The work to which I refer is the narrative of an occurrence, which, although not uncommon even down to a later date, it is difficult now-a-days,—since Islam has ceased to

> wield, as of old, her thirsty lance,
> And shake her crimson plumage to the skies,—

to realize as an actual incident of the nineteenth century;†—the adventures of an amateur antiquarian, who was made captive by Corsairs and carried into Barbary. The hero of this adventure was a Milanese ecclesiastic, Father Felix Caronni. He embarked at Palermo for Naples, in a small merchant vessel laden with oranges, but had scarcely quitted the shore when a pirate-ship hove in sight. The crew, as commonly happened in such cases, took to the boat

* "Ragguaglio del Viaggio compendioso d'un Dilettante Antiquario sorpreso da' Corsari, condotto in Barberia, e felicemente ripatriato." 2 vols. Milan, 1805–6. The work is anonymous, but the authorship is plain from the passport and other circumstances. I am indebted for the knowledge of the book (which is now rare) to Mr. Garnett of the British Museum. A tolerably full account of it may be found in the *Bibliotheque Universelle de Genève* (a continuation of the *Bibliotheque Britannique*) vol. VIII., pp. 388–408.

† A similar narrative was published as late as 1817 by Pananti. "Avventure ed Osservazioni sopra le Coste di Barberia." Firenze

and escaped, leaving Father Caronni and eighteen other passengers to the mercy of the Corsairs, who speedily overpowered the defenceless little vessel. Caronni, as a subject of the Italian Republic and a French citizen,* would have been secured against capture; but his passport was in the hands of the captain who had escaped; and thus, notwithstanding his protestations, he was seized along with the rest, and, under circumstances of great cruelty and indignity, they were all carried into Tunis. Here, however, at the reclamation of the French, supported by the Austrian Consul, Father Caronni was saved from the fate which awaited the rest of the captives—of being sold into slavery,—and at the end of three months, (part of which he devoted to the exploration of the an-

1817. It was translated into English by Mr. Blacquiere, and published in 1819. In the end of the seventeenth century, France and England severally compelled the Dey of Algiers to enter into treaties by which their subjects were protected from these piratical outrages; and in the following century, the increasing naval power of the other great European states tended to secure for them a similar immunity. But the weaker maritime states of the Mediterranean, especially Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, were still exposed not only to attacks upon their vessels at sea, but even to descents upon their shores, in which persons of every age and sex were carried off and sold into slavery. The long wars of the Revolution secured a sort of impunity for these outrages, which at length reached such a height, that when, in 1816, the combined English and Dutch squadron under Lord Exmouth destroyed the arsenal and fleet of Algiers, the number of Christian captives set at liberty was no less than ten hundred and eighty-three. Nevertheless even still the evil was not entirely abated; nor can the secure navigation of the Mediterranean be said to have been completely established till the final capture of Algiers by the French under Duperre and Bourmont, in 1830.

* In virtue of a treaty made in 1683, after the memorable bombardment of Algiers by Admiral Du Quesne.

tiquities of Tunis and the surrounding district,) he was set at liberty and permitted to return to Italy.

Being at a loss, while preparing the narrative of his captivity for publication, for a translation of the papers which he received at Tunis when he was set at liberty, he had recourse to the assistance of the Abate Mezzofanti, as he explains in the following passage.

"No sooner," says he, "had I obtained the *Tiscara** [passport,] than I made an exact copy of it (with the exception of the Bey's seal,) in the precise dimensions of the original. It was not so easy, however, to obtain a translation of this document in Italy, both because it had been hastily written with a reed—the instrument which the Moors employ for that purpose—and because there were introduced into it certain ciphers which are peculiar to the Arabs of Barbary. These difficulties, however, were happily overcome, thanks to the exceeding courtesy, as well as the distinguished learning of the Abate Mezzofanti, Professor of Oriental Languages in the Institute of Bologna, who is commonly reputed to be master of more than twenty-four languages, the greater number of which he speaks with fluency and purity. He has favoured me (in four

* The Moorish form of the common Arabic name *Tezkerah*, [in Egypt, (see Burton's "Medinah and Meccah," I. 26.) Tazkirêh] of a passport. The Moorish Arabic differs considerably (especially in the vowel sounds,) from the common dialect of the East. Caussin de Perceval's Grammar contains both dialects, and a special Grammar of Moorish Arabic was published at Vienna by Dombay, of which Mezzofanti was already possessed (inf. 178.) Both the Grammars named above are in the Mezzofanti Library. *Catalogo*, pp. 14 and 17. Father Caronni gives a fac-simile of a portion of the *Tiscara*.

long letters which contain as much information as might supply a whole course of lectures) with a literal and critically exact version of it, accompanied by copious explanations, as also by a free translation in the following terms :—

"'THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, AND MAHOMET IS HIS PROPHET.'

"'We have liberated Father Felix Caronni. He is hereby permitted to embark from Goletta for the country of the Christians, at the intervention of the French Consul, through the medium of his Dragoman, in consideration of the payment of ninety-nine sequins mahbub, and by the privilege of the mighty and generous Hamudah* Basha Bey, Ben-Dani, whom may God prosper!

"Second Giomada, in the year 1219.'

"*Giomada*† is the name of the sixth month of the Arabs, and the year indicated is the year of their Hegira.‡ And, as the Oriental writing runs in the reverse order to ours, (that is, from right to left,) it is necessary, in order that the words of the transla-

* Sidi Hamudah had been Bey of Tunis from the year 1782, when he succeeded his brother, Ali Bey. He survived till 1815. His reign is described as the Augustan age of Tunis (Diary of a Tour in Barbary, II. 79). Father Caronni tells of him that when one of his generals,—a Christian,—was about to become a Mahomedan in the hope of ingratiating himself with Hamudah, he rebuked the renegade for his meanness. "A hog," said he, "remains always a hog in my eyes, even though he has lost his tail."

† This month is called in the common Arabic of Egypt *Gumada*. There are two of the Mahomedan months called by this name, *Gumada-l-Oola*, and *Gumada-t-Taniyeh* (Lane's Modern Egyptians, I. 330). The latter, which is the sixth month of the year, is the one meant here. As the Mahomedan year consists of only three hundred and fifty days, it is hardly necessary to say that its months do not permanently correspond with those of our year. They retrograde through the several seasons during a cycle of thirty-three years.

‡ The year of the Hegira, 1219, corresponds with A.D. 1804.

tion may correspond with those of the original, to take the precaution of reading it backwards, or, what will answer the same purpose, in a mirror. What will strike the reader, however, as most strange, (as it did myself when first the Tiscara was translated for me) is its particularizing the 'payment of ninety-nine gold mahbubs,' which, at the rate of nine *lire* to each, would make eight hundred and ninety-one Milanese *lire :* whereas this is utterly false as far as I am personally concerned, and the French commissary did not give me the least intimation of any payment whatever. The Abate Mezzofanti suggests with much probability, that it may be a part of the *stylus curiæ* of these greedy barbarians to boast in their piratical diplomacy that no Christian, and still more no ecclesiastic, has ever been made captive by them without being, even though a Frank, supposed to be a lawful prize, and consequently without being made 'to bleed' a little."*

This is the first published notice of Mezzofanti which has come under my observation ; and it is particularly interesting as an early example of his habit of cultivating not only the principal languages, but the minor varieties of each. The knowledge that, when he had barely completed his thirtieth year, he was reputed to be master of *more than twenty-four languages*, may perhaps prepare us to regard with less incredulity the marvels which we shall find related of his more advanced career.

* Ragguaglio del Viaggio, vol. II. p. 140–1. Milan 1806.—The book, though exceedingly rambling and discursive, is not uninteresting. The second part contains the Author's antiquarian speculations, which curiously anticipate some of the results of the recent explorations at Tunis.

In the autumn of the same year the Abate Mezzofanti paid his long-intended visit to Parma and De Rossi. The Italians, and especially the literary men of Italy, are proverbially bad travellers. Magliabecchi never was outside of the gates of Florence in his life, except on two occasions;—once as far as Fiesole, which may almost be called a suburb of the city, and once again to a distance of ten miles. Many an Italian Professor has passed an entire life without any longer excursion than the daily walk from his lodgings to the lecture-room. Even the great geographer, D'Anville, who lived to the age of eighty-five, is said never to have left his native city, Paris;* and yet he was able to point out many errors in the plan of the Troad made upon the spot by the Comte de Choiseul. It has been frequently alleged of Mezzofanti, also, as enhancing still more the marvel of his acquirements in languages, that, until his fortieth year, he had never quitted his native city. That this statement is not literally true appears from a letter which he wrote to the Abate de Rossi, on his return to Bologna, after the visit to which I have alluded.

"Pressed as I am, by my many occupations," he says, November 11, 1805, "I cannot delay writing at least a few lines, in grateful acknowledgment of the kindnesses which I received from you during my happy sojourn in your city.

I had been prepared for this, as well by the reports of others regarding your amiable disposition, as by the courtesy which I had myself experienced; but all my anticipations had fallen far short of the reality. Feeling that it is impossible for me to offer you a suitable acknowledgment, I beg that, although I have neither words to express it, nor means of giving it effect,

* Moore's "Diary." III. 138.

you will believe me to be deeply sensible of my obligation to you. I shall preserve all your valued presents with most jealous care. The 'Persian Authology'* has been greatly relished by all here who apply to the study of that language.

"I shall often have to claim your indulgence for the trouble which I shall not fail to give you. After the many proofs I have had of your kindness, I feel that I should be offending you, were I to ask you to let me hope to reckon myself henceforward among your friends."

The friendly courtesy of the Abate De Rossi rendered Mezzofanti's stay at Parma exceedingly agreeable. One of the friends whom he made during this visit, the learned and venerable Librarian of the Ducal Library of that city, Cavaliere Angelo Pezzana, still survives, and still speaks with an affection which borders upon tenderness of the friendship which resulted from their first meeting, and which was the pride of his later life. Among the subjects of their conversation, Cavaliere Pezzana particularly remembers some observations of Mezzofanti on certain affinities between the Russian and Latin languages, which struck him by their acuteness and originality.

A commission which M. Pezzana gave him at his departure led to the following letter :—

Bologna, November 11, 1805.

In the hope of being able to execute the little commission you gave me regarding the Aldine edition of Aristotle, I have put off writing until I should have searched in our Library.—On doing so, I find that I have been mistaken, as there is no copy of that edition here. I avail myself, however, of this opportunity to

* This book is still in the Mezzofanti Library. It is entitled *Anthologia Persiana: Seu selecta e diversis Persicis Auctoribus in Latinum translata*, 4*to*. Vienna, 1778. See the "Catalogo della Libreria del Card. Mezzofanti," p. 109.

renew the assurance of my gratitude for the numberless kindnesses which you shewed me during the time it was my good fortune to be in your society;—kindnesses which I never can forget, and for which it is my most anxious desire to find some opportunity of making you a return. I beg you to present my respects to Dr. Tommasini, and to offer to Signor Bodoni and his lady my acknowledgments for their great courtesy. Should any occasion arise in which my humble services can be of use, I shall consider myself happy, if you will always put aside every idea of my occupations, and will honour me with your valued commands. Meanwhile accept the assurance of my sincere esteem and attachment.

Mezzofanti's intimacy with the two gentlemen named in this letter, Tommasini and Bodoni, was lasting and sincere. Tommasini, although an eminent physician of Parma and an active member of most of the scientific societies of his day, is little known outside of Italy: but Bodoni, the celebrated printer and publisher of Parma, whose magnificent editions of the classics are still among the treasures of every great library, was a man of rare merit, and a not unworthy representative of the learned fathers of his craft, the Stephens, the Manuzi, and Plantins of the palmy days of typography. He was a native of Saluzzo in the kingdom of Sardinia. His early taste for wood-engraving induced him to visit Rome for the purpose of study: and he set out in company with a school-fellow, whose uncle held some office in the Roman court. Bodoni supported himself and his companion upon the way by the sale of his little engravings, which are now prized as curiosities in the art. On their arrival, however, being coldly received by the friend on whom they had mainly relied, they resolved to return home; but

before leaving Rome, Bodoni paid a visit to the printing-office of the Propaganda, where he had the good fortune to attract the notice of the Abate Ruggieri, then director of that great press. He thus obtained employment in the establishment, and at the same time was permitted to attend the Oriental Schools of the Sapienza ; and thus having learned Hebrew and Arabic, he was employed exclusively upon the Oriental works printed by the Propaganda. The excellence and accuracy of the editions of the *Missale Arabico-Coptum*, and the *Alphabetum Tibetanum* of Padre Giorgi which Bodoni printed, excited universal admiration ; and when, on occasion of the tragical death of his friend and patron Ruggieri, he resolved to leave Rome, he was earnestly invited to settle in England : but he accepted in preference an invitation to Parma, where he was appointed Director of the Ducal Press, and where all the well-known master-pieces of his art were successively produced. Himself a man of much learning, and of a highly cultivated mind, he enjoyed the friendship of most of the literati of Italy.

> Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined,
> A knowledge both of books and human kind—

his conversation was in the highest degree entertaining and instructive ; and his correspondence, which has been published, is full of interest With the Abate De Rossi, who employed his press in all his Oriental publications,* he was for years on terms of the closest

* Bodoni was the printer of De Rossi's "Epithalamium" of Prince Charles Emmanuel, in twenty-five languages, alluded to in page 33. I should say however, that some of his classics,—especially his "Virgilii Opera," although beautiful specimens of typography, have but little critical reputation.

intimacy; and during Mezzofanti's visit to Parma, he treated De Rossi's young disciple with a courtesy which Mezzofanti long and gratefully remembered. Bodoni's wife, who, upon his death in 1813, succeeded to his vast establishment, was, like her husband, highly cultivated, and a most amiable and excellent woman.

Among the languages which occupied Mezzofanti at this time, Persian appears to have received the principal share of his attention. One of the first presents which he received from De Rossi was, as we have seen, a "Persian Anthology;" and in a letter to De Rossi, written early in 1806 (which Cavaliere Pezzana has published in the Modena Journal, *Memorie di Religione,*) he expresses much anxiety to obtain a copy of the great Persian classic, Kemal Eddin.

The same letter, however, contains another request from which it may be inferred that much of his time was still drawn away from these studies by his duties as librarian. Speaking of the catalogue then in preparation, he complains of the miserably defective condition of the library in the department of Bibliography; and begs of his correspondent to send him the titles of the *Bibliotheca* of Hottinger, (perhaps his *Promptuarium, seu Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Heidelberg, 1658) and that of Wolff, in order that he may provide himself with these works, as a guide in his task.

On this subject he speaks more explicitly in a letter of the 3rd of March, in the same year. After alluding to a commission of De Rossi's which he had failed in executing, he proceeds:—

The preparation of the Catalogue keeps me in constant occupation, because these Oriental books are for the most part without the name of the author or the title of the work. Their value, that is to say their scientific importance, bears no proportion to the labour they cost; inasmuch as they are all Grammatical Treatises, books of Law, and such like. However, should I meet any work of interest, I shall not fail to communicate it to you; although, I fancy, it will be difficult to meet with anything that you do not know already.

I received from Vienna immediately on its publication, the Grammar of the learned Dombay,* who is well known for other works, particularly upon the language and history of Morocco. It happens that I have got two copies of it; and I have set one of them apart for you, for which you may perhaps give me in exchange one of your own duplicates. It contains the Grammar arranged after the manner of the Latin Grammarians; the rules of Persian according to Meninski,† with this advantage, that here they are given in consecutive order, whereas in Meninski they are found mixed up with those of the Arabic and Turkish. Your friend, M. Silvestre de Sacy, reviewed it in the *Magazin Encyclopedique*, and took exception to Dombay's reducing the Persian to the system of the Latin Grammar. I hope shortly to receive the other from Leipsic, as also the tales of Nizami, in Persian and Latin, printed by Wolff, and published by L. Hill, who promised for the same year, 1802, an edition of the *Divan* of Hafiz.‡

I am only waiting for a safe opportunity to forward your books. We cannot fail of one in the coming spring. As to the "Oriental Anthology," I have given it in charge to the courier as far as Milan, but have not yet heard intelligence of it.

* "Grammatica Linguæ Mauro-Arabicæ, juxta vernaculi Idiomatis Usum." 4to. Vienna, 1800. See the "Catalogo della Libreria Mezzofanti" p. 14.

† "Institutiones Linguæ Turcicæ, cum Rudimentis parallelis Linguarum Arabicæ et Persicæ." 2 vols. 4to. Vienna, 1756." "Catalogo," p. 36.

‡ An intended reprint of the edition of the *Divan*, which was published at Calcutta, 1791.

Book-buying is undoubtedly very troublesome, and the least disagreeable part of it is the money the books cost, although in Oriental works I always find this excessive. I beg you not to spare me whenever any occasion offers in which my services may beuseful.

The Abate de Rossi had requested to be furnished with a note of the principal Oriental MSS. of the Bologna collection ; but Mezzofanti's labour in preparing the general Catalogue was so great, and the time fixed for its completion was so entirely inadequate, that, for a considerable time, he was unable to comply with his friend's request. It is to this he alludes in the following letter, dated May 11, 1806. After apologizing for the delay in forwarding the book referred to in the letter of March 3rd, he proceeds :—

My labour at the Catalogue still continues, nor can I hope at the period appointed for its close, to have done more than merely sketch it out ;—that is, we shall have nothing entered but the bare titles of the works. This, however, in itself, is a task so difficult in our Oriental MSS., that, up to the present time, it has never been satisfactorily done. Besides the Oriental books, I have also to deal with the Greek ; and all must be in readiness within the coming month. The truth is that I should require a year at least to give a proper shape to my labour, and in the beginning my impression was that it would require two. And in my present difficulty, what gives me most pain is that I am not able to send you, as early as I could wish, the note which you have often expressed a wish to obtain ; but I shall send it the very first moment in my power.

I have received your new work,* for which I beg you to accept my best thanks. I did not write at the moment, knowing you

* Probably the "Lexicon Hebraicum Selectum ;" or the "Dissertation on an edition of the Koran," both of which were published at Parma, in 1805. See "Catalogo della Lib. Mezzofanti," p. 17 and p. 40.

do not like very frequent letters; I have besides too much respect for time devoted like yours to the honour of Italy, on which your works in Oriental literature have shed a lustre. I long nevertheless for a fitting opportunity to prove to you the sincerity of my gratitude.

Under this constant and protracted labour Mezzofanti's health began to give way. His chest was seriously threatened during the summer of 1806, and had it not been that he fortunately obtained an extension of the time allotted for the completion of his task at the Catalogue, it is not unlikely that his constitution, naturally weak, might have been permanently enfeebled. Family cares, too, formed no inconsiderable part of his burden. The health of his mother, which had for a long time been very uncertain, was completely broken down. She was now entirely blind. For many weeks of this season he was in daily apprehension of her death; and, in the pressure of his engagements, his hours of attendance on her sick bed were subtracted from the time hitherto devoted to rest, already sufficiently curtailed.

In the midst of these cares and occupations, Mezzofanti was surprised by a flattering invitation to transfer his residence to Paris, with a promise of patronage and distinction from the Emperor Napoleon, who was at this time eagerly engaged in plans for the development of the literary and artistic glories of his capital. More than one of Mezzofanti's countrymen were already in the enjoyment of high honours at Paris. First among them may be named Volta, for many years Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Pavia. More pliant than his

great fellow-discoverer, Galvani, or perhaps more favourably circumstanced as not being, like him, a member of a Papal University, he had escaped the proscription which brought Galvani to his grave—one of those victims of loyalty whom Petrarch declares

——assai più belli
Con la lor povertà, che Mida o Crasso
Con l'oro, ond' a virtù furon ribelli;—

Volta was called from Pavia to Paris, where he was rewarded with distinctions, emoluments, titles, and, more flattering than all, with the personal notice and patronage of the great conqueror himself, who was often present at his experiments, and displayed a warm interest in the results to which they led.*

Such were at this period the tempting rewards of scientific or literary eminence in France. Moreover, Count Marescalchi, in whose family Mezzofanti had acted as tutor and librarian during the years of his deprivation, was now Resident Minister of the Kingdom of Italy at Paris. The Count's intercourse with Mezzofanti was but little interrupted by their separation; and, even during his residence in Paris, the latter continued to correspond with him; chiefly on matters connected with the education of his children, or with the completion or extension of his noble library. The extent of their intimacy indeed may be

* It was on occasion of one of Volta's demonstrations that Napoleon made the comparison which has since become celebrated. "Here, doctor," said he, to his physician Corvisart, pointing to the Voltaic pile; "here is the image of life! The vertebral column is the pile: the liver is the negative, the bladder, the positive pole." See Whewell's Inductive Sciences, III. 87.

inferred from one of Mezzofanti's letters to the Count, dated September 16, 1806, in which we find him freely employing the services of the minister in procuring books at Paris, not only for himself but for his literary friends in Bologna.*

It was through this Count Marescalchi that the invitation to Paris was conveyed to Mezzofanti, and it cannot be doubted that it was accompanied by a warm recommendation from the Count himself. No trace of this formal correspondence is now discoverable; but probably far more interesting, as it is certainly far more characteristic, than the official letter or reply, is the following playful letter to one of Count Marescalchi's sons, Carlino (Charlie), Mezzofanti's former pupil—now the representative of the house—who had written a special letter, to add the expression of his own wishes to those of his father, that his old instructor should join them once again at Paris.

Bologna, September 16, 1806.

But three letters, dearest Charlie, in an entire year—two from Lyons, and one from Paris—to cheer my regrets in being separated from you! If I were to take this as the measure of your love for me, I should indeed have reason to be sad. But I have abundant other proofs of your feelings in my regard; and at all

* For instance among the books which he asks the Count in this letter to send, are the works of "*l'immortale Haüy*;"—the celebrated Abbé Haüy, who after Romè de l'Isle, is the founder of the science of Crystallography, and who at this time was at the height of his brilliant career of discovery. (Whewell's "Inductive Sciences" III. 222.) Haüy's works were intended for his friend Ranzani.

events, I am not one who can afford to be too rigid in insisting upon the frequency of correspondence, unless I wish to furnish grave grounds of complaint against myself.

Few, however, as your letters have been, I am deeply grateful for their warm and affectionate sentiments, which carry with them such an evidence of sincerity as to leave me, even when you do not write, no ground for doubting what your feelings still are towards me. I am not sure whether in your regard I shall be equally fortunate; for I am fully sensible that I have not the power of infusing into what I write all the warmth and sincerity that I really feel. However, you are not dependent on my words, in order to be satisfied of the truth of my affection; and, knowing it as you do, even a lesser token of it than this will suffice to convince you.

I am still here at Bologna following the same old round of occupations. Nor am I dissatisfied with my lot, for I am quite sensible of my inability to take a loftier flight. I feel that the shade suits me best. Were I to go to Paris, I should be obliged to set myself up upon some candlestick, where I should only give out a faint and flickering gleam, which would soon die utterly away. Nevertheless I am not the less grateful for your advice; though I perceive that you are dissatisfied with me because I am such a little fellow.

A thousand, thousand greetings to your dear little sisters. Renew my remembrance to your father, and when you have an occasional moment of leisure from your tasks, pray bestow it upon

Your sincere friend,

D. Joseph Mezzofanti.

Besides the unaffected modesty and the distrust of his own fitness for a prominent position (even with such advantages as those offered to him at Paris,) which are expressed in this letter, the Abate Mezzofanti was also moved to decline the invitation, both by affection for his native city and love of its university

life (to which we shall find him looking back with fondness even after his elevation to the cardinalate,) and by unwillingness to part from his family, to whom he was tenderly attached. To the latter he had always felt himself bound by duty as well as by affection. The expense of the education of his sister's children, who at this time, (as appears from a little Memoir in the archives of the University drawn up in 1815,) were seven in number, amounted to a considerable sum. They, as well as their parents, still continued to reside in his house; and the same Memoir alludes to another near relative who was at least partially dependent upon him for support.

To these children, indeed, he was as a father. Cavaliere Minarelli, in the interesting note already cited, describes him as "most affectionately devoted to them, and uniting in his manners the loving familiarity of a friend with the graver authority of an instructor." In his brief intervals of leisure from business or study, he often joined them in their little amusements. Without the slightest trace of austerity, he generally managed to give their amusements, as far as possible, a religious character. He usually made the festivals memorable to them by some extra indulgence or entertainment. He encouraged and directed their childish tastes in the embellishment of their little oratories, or in those well-known Christmas devices of Catholic children, the preparation of the "Crib of the Infant Jesus," or the decoration of the "Christmas Tree." He

hoarded his little resources in order to procure for them improving and instructive books. He composed simple odes and sonnets for the several festivals, which it was his greatest enjoyment to hear them recite. The simplicity of his disposition, and a natural fondness for children which was one of the characteristics even of his later life, made all this easy to him. He was always ready, if not to take a part, at least to manifest an interest, in the pleasures of his young friends. In the carnival especially, when amusement seems, for a time, to form the serious business of every Italian household, he was never wanting; and, on one memorable occasion, he actually composed a little comedy, to be acted by his nephews and nieces for the humble family circle.

During the whole winter of 1806–7 his time was still occupied in the uncongenial labour of compiling the Catalogue.

On the 25th of September, he writes to the Abate De Rossi, apologizing for delay in replying to a letter received from him.

"A complication of unfortunate accidents has, up to this moment, prevented me from answering your kind letter of last July. My poor mother has frequently, during the summer, been in extreme danger of death. My own chest, too, has more than once been threatened, and is still far from strong. All this, however, does not save me from a feeling of remorse at having been so tardy towards one whose scientific reputation, as well as his courteous manners, entitle him to so much consideration. My labour, as you say, is not yet over. The task, as I had indeed anticipated from the beginning, has proved an exceedingly difficult one. As an evidence of the difficulty I need only mention

that the celebrated Giuseppe Assemani, in the similar work which he undertook,* has made numerous mistakes, having in one instance given no less than six different titles to seven copies of the same work. This great orientalist, with all his learning, could not command the time necessary for so troublesome a task as that of ascertaining the titles and authors of books which are quite unknown and often imperfect. For my part, I resolved from the beginning that I would not, willingly at least, add to the other deficiencies of which I am conscious, that of haste and insufficient time. *Nam quo minus ingenio possum, subsidio mihi diligentiam comparavi;* and the condescension of his Serene Highness has in the end relieved me, by extending until April the time allowed for the completion of the task. The grammarians, rhetoricians, poets, prosodians, logicians, and theologians, have taken up all my time hitherto; in the course of the next two months, I hope to complete the enumeration of the other authors; and then I shall at last fulfil my promise of sending you, when occasion serves, whatever I think may interest you."

De Rossi, in his letter, to which this is a reply, had put some questions regarding the contents of the octavo edition of D'Herbelot's *Bibliothêque Orientale*, the preface of which had contained a promise of many important improvements. Mezzofanti, referring to these promised additions, goes on to say, "In the articles which I have compared, I have only found a few verbal corrections. But in the preface, we are promised additional articles, drawn from the narratives of travellers subsequent to D'Herbelot. From this promise you will be able to infer what information you may expect to derive from the edition, and

* He alludes to the *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana.* Joseph Assemani's nephew, Stephen Evodius, compiled a catalogue of the Oriental MSS. at Florence.

whether it is likely to be useful for your purpose. I have not yet received the supplement, which was to contain certain articles which have been postponed for reasons explained in the preface. Perhaps the reason of its not having been printed, may be, that the articles in question, being of use to orientalists alone, may be found by them in the former editions.

"As it would be no small distinction for the collection of Oriental MSS. belonging to this Royal Library of ours, if among them there should be found any deserving of a place amongst the MSS. cited in your dictionary, I shall endeavour, in the hope that it may prove so, to complete my task as speedily as possible, so as to send you at least an index, out of which you may yourself choose the name of any author whom you shall judge deserving of notice.

"I believe Dombay's work has been published. I have the title, '*Geschichte der Mauritan. Könige; aus dem Arabischen übersetzt*';* but without date or place. I shall write to Vienna as soon as I can, to order it, if it should be published. I have made a good many interesting acquisitions lately; as for instance, *Albucasis* '*De Chirurgia.*'† Oxonii, 1778.

* The exact title is "Geschichte der Scherifen, oder der Könige des jetzt regierendes Hauses zu Marokko." It was published, not at Vienna, as this letter supposes, but at Agram, in 1801.

† A Moorish physician of Cordova, in the twelfth century, variously called *Albucasa, Buchasis, Bulcaris, Gafar;* but properly *Abul Cassem Khalaf Ben Abbas.* There are many early Latin translations of his work. A very curious edition, with wood-cuts, (Venice, 1500,) is in the British Museum. The one referred to in this letter is in Arabic and Latin, 2 vols. 4to.

'*Maured Allatafet Jemaleddini filii Togri Bardii; seu Rerum Aegyptiacarum Annales ab Anno C.* 971 *ad* 1453';* several '*Anthologias*' and '*Chrestomathias*;' one of which, that of Rink and Vater, has at the end a *Bibliotheca Arabica* continued up to 1802; and some other books."

At this date, Mezzofanti's correspondence with De Rossi is interrupted; and, although there appears to have been a pretty regular interchange of correspondence between them for some years longer,† no further letter has been found among those of De Rossi's papers which are deposited in the library of Parma, except one written in the year 1812.

Scanty as are the details supplied by those which are preserved, they, at least, afford some insight into the process by which the writer's extraordinary faculty was developed and perfected. However acute and almost instinctive this faculty may have been, it is plain from these letters, that it was at this time most systematically and laboriously cultivated. However much Mezzofanti may have owed to nature, it is certain, that for all the practical results of his great natural gifts he was indebted to his own patient and almost plodding industry: and it may cheer the humble student in the long and painful course through which

* "Arabisches, Syrisches, und Chaldäisches Lesebuch, Von Friederich Theodor Rink und J. Severinus Vater," Leipsic, 1802. Rink, Professor of Theology and of Oriental Languages, at Heidelberg, was an orientalist of considerable eminence. Vater is, of course, the well-known successor of Adelung as editor of the *Mithridates*

† Thus, in one of Mezzofanti's letters, in 1812, he speaks of "Le molestie che si spesso Le ho date colle mie lettere."

alone he can aspire to success, to find that even this prodigy of language was forced to tread the same laborious path;—to see the anxious care with which he collected and consulted grammars, dictionaries, manuals, reading books, and other similar commonplace appliances of the study; and to learn, that, with all his unquestioned and unquestionable genius, he did not consider himself above the drudgery at which even less gifted students are but too apt to murmur or repine.

It may be added that the toilsome practice of writing out translations from one language into another which these letters disclose, was continued by Mezzofanti through his entire career of study, although in his latter years he pursued it more as an amusement than as a serious task.

It is hard, in ordinary cases, to infer from such performances the exact degree of proficiency in the language which they should be presumed to indicate. Some translations are only the fruit of long and careful study.* On the contrary, there are instances on record in which excellent translations have been produced by persons possessing a very slight knowledge of the original. Thus Monte, the author of the best Italian translation of Homer, was utterly unacquainted with Greek;† Halley, without knowing a word of Arabic, was able to guess his way, (partly by mathematical reasoning, partly by the aid of a Latin version, which,

* M. Patru spent three years in translating Cicero's "Pro Archia;" and in the end, had not satisfied himself as to the rendering of the very first sentence.

† Moore's *Diary*, III., 183.

however, only contained about one-tenth of the entire work,) through an Arabic translation of Apollonius *De Sectione Rationis*;* and M. Arnaud, the first French translator of Lalla Rookh, did not know a word of the English language.†

But on all these points Mezzofanti's fame is beyond suspicion. His translations, at least in his later life, were at once produced with the utmost freedom and rapidity, and are universally acknowledged to have been models of verbal correctness; and in most instances where the same passage is translated into many languages, the versions display a remarkable mastery over the peculiar forms and idioms of each.

This wonderful success must be ascribed, no doubt, to his early and systematic exercise in translation, of which the specimen submitted to De Rossi is but one example.

* D' Israeli's Curiosities of Literature, p. 524.

† Moore's *Diary*, III., 183.

CHAPTER IV.

[1807-1814.]

The *Catalogue Raisonné* of the Oriental and Greek manuscripts was not completed until 1807, having thus absorbed the greater part of Abate Mezzofanti's time during two years.

A large proportion of the Oriental MSS. had never even been entered upon the ordinary library catalogue, and no attempt at all had been made to describe them accurately, much less to register their character or contents. Very many of them too, as we learn from Mezzofanti's letters, were imperfect; and a still more considerable number wanted at least the title and the name of the author. It was no trivial labour, therefore, to examine the entire collection; to decide on the name, the age, and the authorship of each; to describe their contents; and to reduce them all into their respective classes. For most of these particulars the compiler of the catalogue was utterly without a guide. It is true that Joseph Assemani's catalogue of the Oriental MSS. of the Vatican, and the catalogue of those of the Medicean

Library at Florence by his nephew Stephen Evodius, were in some cases available. But many of the Bologna MSS. are not to be found in either catalogue; and for all these Mezzofanti was of course compelled to rely altogether on his own lights.

The catalogue, as drawn up by him, is still preserved, and, notwithstanding these disadvantages, is described as a highly creditable performance, and "a valuable supplement to the labours of Talmar and the Assemanis;" * and at all events it was to his long and laborious researches while engaged in its preparation, that he owed that minute familiarity with the whole literature of the East, ancient and modern, which, as we shall see, was a subject of wonder even to learned orientals themselves.

During the year 1807, an opportunity occurred for testing practically how far the reputation which he had acquired corresponded with his real attainments. On the outbreak of hostilities between the Porte and Russia in that year, the Russian ambassador, Italinski, withdrew (not without some risk and difficulty)† from Constantinople, and, being conveyed on board the British ship of war, Canopus, to Malta, afterwards made his way to Ancona. While the ambassador remained at Ancona, the chancellor of the embassy, Angelo Timoni, who was of Bolognese origin, came to visit his native city; accompanied by Matteo Pisani, the official interpreter, who was one of the best linguists of his time, and especially a perfect master of all the modern languages of the East.

* See Historisch-Politische Blätter, x. 203-4.

† See Alison's History of Europe, Vol. vi., p. 371-2.

As they resided, during their stay at Bologna, in the house of his friend, Dr. Santagata, their visit was a severe ordeal for Mezzofanti, who was constantly in their society; but he withstood it triumphantly; and Santagata records their wonder and delight to find that, without ever having visited the East, or mixed in Oriental society, the Bolognese professor had nevertheless attained a "mastery over the many and various languages, especially Oriental ones, in which they tried him, and that the marvellous and all but inconceivable accounts which they had received regarding him, proved to be not only credible but actually true."*

A great and lasting mortification nevertheless soon afterwards befel Mezzofanti, in the unexpected deprivation of his beloved professorship. The circumstances which accompanied his removal have not been fully detailed, but there is enough in the history of the period to supply an intelligible explanation. The conflict of Napoleon with the Holy See was just then approaching its crisis. From the beginning of this year the French troops had occupied Rome. Two cardinal secretaries of state had been forcibly ejected from office. The Pope was a prisoner in his own palace and his authority was completely superseded. Now upon these and the many similar outrages to which the venerable Pontiff was daily subjected, the opinions of Mezzofanti were no secret; and there can be no doubt that the determination of the Government to remove him from the university was mainly influenced by this knowledge; although in deference to public opinion, and to the universal feeling of respect with which he was

* Santagata "Sermones Duo," p. 9.

regarded, they abstained from formally depriving him of his professorship. His removal was effected indirectly by a decree, dated November 15, 1808, by which the Oriental professorship itself was suppressed.

Although a pension, and as it would seem, not a very illiberal one, was assigned to him, he felt very deeply this exclusion from a career so congenial to his tastes. He continued nevertheless, as before, to instruct pupils privately in these and other languages; and although, as to details, the history of his own studies at this time is a complete blank, yet from his known habits it may reasonably be presumed that when the first feeling of mortification had subsided, the ultimate result of his release from the duties of his chair, was to direct his untiring energies into new fields of research; and it seems to have been during this interval that he first gave his attention to the Sanscrit and other Indian languages;—a family which had till then been but little cultivated except in England, but to whose vast importance, as well as widely extended philological relations, Frederic Schlegel* had just awakened the attention of the learned throughout continental Europe.

From the date of this second deprivation, till the year 1812, his quiet and uniform course of life presents hardly a single interesting incident.

In June, 1810, his mother died. But her advanced age and infirm health had long prepared him for this bereavement. She died on the feast of St .Aloysius (June 21,) in her seventy-third year.

* By his celebrated Essay "Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier," 1808.

The only detail regarding his personal occupations, which I have been able to discover, is derived from a letter, dated November 30th, 1811,* to his friend Pezzana, at Parma, which exhibits him again engaged in the drudgery of compiling a catalogue—that of the library of Count Marescalchi. Pezzana had published, some time before, a short bibliographical essay on two very rare editions of Petrarch, which are still preserved in the Parma Collection. Mezzofanti, while engaged in cataloguing the Mareschalchi library, discovered a copy of one of these editions, and at once wrote to communicate the fact to Pezzana.

I may also mention, what, in a life so uneventful, must claim to be regarded as an event—a short journey which he made to Modena and Mantua. Joseph Minarelli, the eldest of his sister's sons, was

* As this letter may perhaps possess some bibliographical value, I shall translate it here—

"In making the catalogue for the library of His Excellency Count Marescalchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the kingdom of Italy, I have discovered a copy of the Siliprandine edition of Petrarch, which corresponds exactly to the very full description published by you, except that in this one the table of contents is at the close, in which place you remark, (at page 35,) it would stand better than in that which it occupies in your Parma copies. The leaves are 188 in number, as there happens to be a second blank one before the index.

"I mention the fact to you at the suggestion of His Excellency; but I gladly avail myself of the opportunity which the communication affords me of thanking you in writing for your kindness in presenting me with your learned letter upon the present edition, together with your valuable bibliographical notices of the two exceedingly rare editions of the 15th century,* and of renewing, at the same time, the assurance of my respect and esteem.

"Bologna, Nov. 30, 1811."

* The title of Pezzana's essay is "Notizie bibliographiche intorno a due rarissime edizioni del Petrarca del Secolo XV.," Parma: 1808. It is printed by Bodoni.

summoned to Modena in 1813, to ballot in the conscription which followed the terrible campaign of 1812, so fatal to the armies of France. Signora Minarelli was naturally much alarmed at the chance of her son's being drawn in the conscription, and in consideration for her anxiety. his uncle accompanied him to Modena upon the occasion.

It becomes especially difficult henceforward to follow the history of his studies. The literary friends of this part of his career;—his colleagues in the University; Ranzani; Caturegli, the astronomer; the eminent botanist, Felippo Re; his fellow-pupil and fellow-teacher, Clotilda Tambroni; Schiassi; Magistrini; and others of less note, who could have supplied information, not only as to his habits and pursuits, but as to the actual stages of his progress, are long since dead. The letters of Pietro Giordani,* however, recently published, may, in some measure, fill up the blank; not, it is true, as to the details of his biography, but at least in so far as regards the opinion entertained in Bologna of his character and acquirements. Indeed the testimony of Giordani is less open to exception than any which could have emanated from the personal friends of Mezzofanti. Giordani had entered the Benedictine congregation, and had even received the order of sub-deaconship; but on the

* *Opere di Pietro Giordani, Vols. I.-VI.* Milano, 1845. Giordani is mentioned by Byron, (Life and Journals, VI., 262,) as one of the few "foreign literary men whom he ever could abide." It is curious that the only other name which he adds is that of Mezzofanti.

outbreak of the Revolution, he had renounced the monastic life, cast aside the Benedictine habit, and thrown himself into the arms of the revolutionary party in Italy. Under the French rule at Bologna, he obtained as the reward of his principles, the place of Assistant Librarian, and also that of Deputy Professor of Latin and Italian Eloquence. Hence it will easily be believed that his relations with the Papal party in the University were by no means friendly; and, as he had had with the Abate Mezzofanti himself (as I learn from an interesting letter of M. Libri which shall be inserted hereafter,) some personal misunderstandings, he may be presumed to have been but little disposed to over-rate the qualifications of an antagonist. It is no mean evidence of Mezzofanti's merit, therefore, that Giordani has specially excepted him from the very disparaging estimate which he expresses regarding the literary men of Italy at this time. "I have held but little intercourse with literary men," he writes to his friend Lazzaro Papi, "finding them commonly possessed of but little learning and a great deal of passion. Here, however, I have met an exception to the rule—the Abate Mezzofanti—a man not only of the utmost piety, but of attainments truly wonderful and all but beyond belief. You must, of course, have heard of him; but indeed he well deserves a wider fame than he enjoys, for the number of languages which he knows most perfectly, although this is the least part of his learning. Nevertheless, such is his excessive modesty, that he lives here in obscurity, and I must add, to the disgrace of the age, in poverty."*

* Opere di Pietro Giordani: Edited (with a biography) by Antonio Gussalli. Gussalli is also the translator of F. Cordara's "Expedition of Charles Edward," Milan: 1845. See Quarterly Review, lxxix., pp. 141-68.

Nor is Giordani's report to be regarded as one of those vague panegyrics, which, when Mezzofanti's fame was established, each new visitor was wont to re-echo. Giordani is not only well-known as one of the purest Italian writers of the century, but enjoyed the highest reputation as a critical scholar; and the subject on which, in another of his letters, he defers to the judgment of Mezzofanti—a delicate question of Greek criticism—was precisely that on which he himself was best qualified to pronounce. In a letter to the Abate Canova (Feb 3, 1812,) he mentions a conjecture that had recently interested him very much; viz., that the great Roman architect, Vitruvius, was a Greek, although he wrote in Latin. His chief argument is based upon Vitruvius's Latinity, in which he detects traces of foreign idiom. But, lest he should yield too much to fancy, he had appealed to the judgment of some of his colleagues, and he communicates the result to his correspondent. One of the persons thus consulted was Mezzofanti. "I should not rely on my own judgment," says Giordani, "had I not convinced Cicognara and Mezzofanti that it is right. The authority of the latter is the more important, because my argument rests chiefly on the style, in every line of which I find impressed, even where the subject is not technical, traces of halting [*storpiato*] and ill-translated Greek; and you know what a judge Mezzofanti is of this point."*

In a letter to another friend, Count Leopoldo

* Ibid, pp. 235-36

Cicognara, (since known as the biographer of Canova)* Giordani reports the sequel of this discussion, which confirms in a very remarkable manner, Giordani's judgment of Mezzofanti's critical sagacity. Mezzofanti had at first assented to Giordani's conjecture ; but on a closer examination he discovered, that what Giordani had considered the Grecisms of Vitruvius's style, were, in reality, but *translations from various Greek authors*, from whom Vitruvius largely borrows, and whom he actually enumerates in the preface of the seventh book. Mezzofanti further pointed out a phrase in the same preface which at once put an end to the discussion, and the discovery of which, as Giordani justly observes, in itself "indicated an inquiring and critical mind." Vitruvius, in speaking of the Latin writers upon his art, as contradistinguished from the Greek, calls them "antiqui *nostri*."†

To the same friend, Count Cicognara, Giordani in a previous letter, dated January 30th, 1812, had written of Mezzofanti's own peculiar faculty of languages, in terms of almost rapturous admiration. "You know Mezzofanti," he says ;—"Mezzofanti—the rarest, most unheard of, most inconceivable of living men. I call him, and he is, the man of all nations and all ages. By Jove ! he appears as though he had been born in the beginning of the world, and, like

* Cicognara is mentioned by Byron in the Dedication of the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold (VIII. 192.) among "the great names which Italy has still."

† Ibid, p. 240.

St. Anthony, had lived in every age and in every country!"*

In connexion with this very remarkable testimony to the accuracy of Mezzofanti's knowledge of Greek, I may mention (although it more properly belongs to a later period of his life) an amusing anecdote illustrative of his accomplishments as a Latinist, which is recorded by Dr. Santagata, and the hero of which was M. Bucheron, Professor of Latin Literature in the University of Turin, and one of the most celebrated classical philologists of modern Italy. M. Bucheron came to Bologna, from some cause strongly prepossessed against Mezzofanti, and disposed to regard him in the light of a mere literary charlatan, of showy but superficial acquirements. Of his Latinity—especially in all that bears upon the critical niceties of the language, and the numberless philological questions regarding it which have arisen among modern scholars, M. Bucheron entertained the lowest possible estimate;—considering it, in truth, impossible, that one whose attention had been divided over so many languages as fame ascribed to Mezzofanti, *could be* solidly grounded in any of them. He resolved, therefore, to put the Abate's Latinity to a rigorous test; and came to the library prepared with a number of questions, bearing upon the niceties of the Latin language, which he proposed to introduce, as it were casually, in his expected conversation. He was presented to Mezzofanti by his friend, Michele Ferrucci, Librarian of the University of Pisa, from

* Opere di Pietro Giordani, II. 231.—Letter to Leopoldo Cicognara, Jan. 30.

whom, I may add, Dr. Santagata received the account of their interview. The conversation, as Bucheron had pre-determined, began upon some common-place subject: but in a short time he artfully contrived to turn it upon those topics on which he desired to probe his companion. The trial was a most animated one. From a series of obscure and difficult questions of Latin philology, they passed to a variety of oriental, historical, and archæological topics. At the moment when the interest of the conversation was at its very height, Ferrucci was unfortunately called away by business; but the result may be judged from the sequel. On his return, after a somewhat lengthened absence, he met Bucheron coming from the Library.

"Well," said he, "what do you think of Mezzofanti?"

"*Per Bacco!*" replied the astounded Piedmontese. "*Per Bacco! é il Diavolo!*" *

His celebrity, indeed, was by this time universally established. With all his unaffected humility; with the full consciousness (which he expressed in all simplicity and truth to his young friend, Carlino Marescalchi) that he was "best fitted for the shade"—he had insensibly grown into one of the notabilities of Bologna. He was constantly visited and consulted, especially by Oriental students, from foreign countries. What is more remarkable, more than one Jewish scholar appears in the record of his visitors. Among the papers of the Abate De Rossi is a letter of this period (March 18th, 1812,) in which Mezzo-

* Santagata "Sermones," p. 20-1. There is a mixture of humour and stateliness in the Doctor's Latin rendering of the exclamation:—"*Ædepol, est Diabolus!*"

fanti introduces to him a certain "Signor Moise Ber;" and, notwithstanding the variety of orthography, (a variety quite natural in an Italian letter, there can be no doubt that this Signor Moise Ber was no other than Rabbi Moses Beer of the Israelite University of Rome, whose Orations and Discourses have since been published.*

Mezzofanti's opportunities of conversing with foreigners were much increased by his becoming permanently attached to the Library of the University (with which the Library of the Institute had been incorporated by the French) as Deputy-Librarian. This appointment he received on the 28th of March, in 1812. As the chief librarian at this time was the Abate Pozzetti, who, like Mezzofanti, was an honorary professor of the University, and one of his most valued friends, the appointment was especially agreeable to him: and, independently of its other advantages, it became for him, as I said, from the constant passing and re-passing of strangers from every country, a school in which he was able to exercise himself, almost hourly, in every department of his multilingual studies.

The late Lord Guilford, who was Chancellor

* "Orazioni Funebrie Discorsi Panegyrici, di quelli pronunciati da Moise S. Beer, già Rabbino Maggiore presso l'Università Israelitica di Roma." Fascicolo primo. Livorno 1837. The name *Beer* is an eminent one among the German Jews. The dramatist Michael Beer of Berlin; his brother, William Beer the astronomer; and a second brother, Meyer Beer the composer, (commonly written as one name, *Meyerbeer*,) have made it known throughout Europe: Possibly Moses Beer was of the same family.

of the University of Corfu, made his acquaintance during one of his visits to Bologna; and on every subsequent occasion on which he passed through that city, Mezzofanti was invariably his guest, accompanied by all the Greeks who chanced to be at the time students of the University.

As his reputation extended, the literary societies of the various cities of Italy were naturally desirous to number him among their members. He was already an associate of the *Societá Colombina* at Florence, and of the "Society of Letters, Sciences, and Arts," at Leghorn; and he received about this time, the decoration of the Royal Order of the Two Sicilies. The only literary society, however, in whose proceedings he took an active part, was the Scientific Academy of the Institute of his native city. It has been commonly supposed that he rarely, if at all, appeared in the literary arena, and it is true that he has not left behind him anything at all commensurate with his reputation; but he frequently read papers, chiefly on philological subjects, in the Bolognese Academy. The first of these which is noticed by Dr. Santagata was read on the 22nd of July, 1813; and another, "On the Symbolic Paintings of the Mexicans," was delivered in the following session, on the 23rd of March, 1814. Owing to his early association with several ex-Jesuit American Missionaries who had settled in Bologna, he had long felt an interest in the curious subject of Mexican Antiquities. Among his MSS., which still remain in the possession of the Cavaliere Minarelli at Bologna, is a Mexican Calen-

dar, drawn up by Mezzofanti's own hand, and illustrated with fac-similes of the original pictures and symbolical representations from the pencil of his niece, Signora Anna Minarelli; but of the paper read in the Academy, no trace has been found.

CHAPTER V.

[1814-1817.]

The year 1814, so memorable in general history, was also an important one in the humble fortunes of the Abate Mezzofanti.

The success of the papal cause in Italy naturally opened a new career to the men against whom fidelity to the papal interest had long closed the ordinary avenues to distinction.

In the close of 1813, the reverses, which, from the disastrous Russian expedition, had succeeded each other with startling rapidity, at length forced upon Napoleon the conviction that he had overcalculated the endurance of the people of France. He now learned, when too late, that the reckless expenditure of human blood with which his splendid successes were purchased, had brought sorrow and suffering to every fireside in every hamlet through his wide empire, and that the enormous levies which he still continued to demand, and which were called out only to perish in the fruitless contest with his destiny, consummated the popular discontent. No longer, therefore, in a position to brave the public reprobation with which his treatment of Pius

VII. had been visited, he found it necessary to restore the semblance of those more friendly relations which he had maintained with him in the less openly ambitious stage of his career. Accordingly, although among the provisions of the extorted Concordat of Fontainebleau, there was none to which Napoleon, in his secret heart, clung more tenaciously than the renunciation which it implied on the part of the Pontiff of the sovereignty of Rome, he found it necessary, notwithstanding, to yield so far to public sympathy as to issue an order for the Pope's immediate return to Italy, dated the 22nd of January, 1814. This measure, nevertheless, had evidently been extorted from his fears; and, as he desired nothing from it beyond the effect which he expected it to produce on the public mind, he contrived that upon various pretences the Pope's progress should be interrupted and delayed. For a short time, too, the varying success with which the memorable campaign of 1814 commenced; the opening of the Congress of Chatillon; the conclusion of the armistice of Lusigny;—all served to re-animate his sinking hopes. Thus the Pope was detained day after day, week after week, in the south of France, until the close of the Emperor's death struggle, by the capitulation of Paris; when Pius VII. was at length set free to return to his capital, by an order of the provisional government, dated the 2nd of April, 1814.

Within a few days after the communication of this order, Pius VII. reached Bologna. Among the ecclesiastics who there hastened to offer homage to their

restored sovereign, there were few who could approach his throne with a fuller consciousness of unsullied loyalty, or who could present more unequivocal evidences of the truth and sincerity of the allegiance which they tendered, than the ex-Professor Mezzofanti, Driven from his chair because he refused to compromise his loyalty even by an indirect recognition of the Anti-Papal government, and only restored, when, after the concordat of 1801, the occupation of the Legations had been acquiesced in by the Pontificial government itself, he had a second time suffered the penalty of loyalty in a similar deprivation. It will easily be believed, therefore, that, in the more than gracious reception accorded to him by the Pontiff, a feeling of grateful recognition of his fidelity and of sympathy with the sacrifices which he had made, was mingled with undisguised admiration of his talents and acquirements.

Hence the first impulse of this munificent pope was to attach to his own immediate service a scholar who was at once eminent for learning, distinguished by piety, by priestly zeal, and by loyalty in the hour of trial, unstained even by the slightest compromise. The re-construction of the various Roman tribunals and congregations which, during the captivity of the Pope and Cardinals, had been, for the most part, suspended, suggested an opportunity of employing, with marked advantage for the public service, the peculiar talents which seemed almost idly wasted in the obscurity of a provincial capital. The halls and public offices of Rome had been the school or the

arena of all the celebrated linguists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the very constitution of the congregation and college, "De Propaganda Fide," appeared specially to invite the services of one so eminent in that department. Accordingly, Pius VII. surprised the modest Abate by an invitation to accompany him to Rome, and proposed for his acceptance the important office of the secretaryship of the Propaganda*—one of those so called *poste cardinalizie*, which constitute the first step in the career towards the cardinalate.

Mezzofanti was deeply affected by this mark of the favour and confidence of his sovereign. Independently, too, of these flattering considerations, and of the advantages of rank and fortune which it involved, the mere residence in Rome, and especially in the Propaganda—the great polyglot centre of the ancient and modern world—had many attractions for a student of language so enthusiastic and indefagitable. It was a proud thought, moreover, to follow in the track of Ubicini, and Giorgi, and Piromalli, and the Assemani's. But his modesty was proof against all these temptations. He shrank from the responsibility which this great office involved;—and, with the every expression of gratitude for so distinguished an honour, he declined to exchange the quiet and seclusion of his life at Bologna, for the more brilliant, but far more anxious position held out for his acceptance at Rome.

* See Stolz, "Biografia," p. 12, Manavit, "Esquisse Historique," p. 34.

Not content, however, with personal solicitations, the Pope employed Cardinal Consalvi to use his influence with Mezzofanti. But it was to no purpose. The humble Abate could not be induced to leave his native city. The only mark of favour, therefore, which remained at the disposal of the pontiff, was one which Mezzofanti prized infinitely beyond the more solid, as well as more brilliant, offer which awaited him at Rome,—his re-establishment in the Professorship of Oriental Languages. He was formally restored on the 28th of April, 1814,* a few days after the departure of the Pope from Bologna.

There is no doubt that on this occasion, as on that of his declining the invitation to Paris several years earlier, he was much influenced by those considerations, arising from his relations to the children of his sister, to which I already alluded, his presence in Bologna being now more than ever necessary for the completion of their education. Indeed this was now the chief family duty which bound him to Bologna; for his father, who had survived his mother by several years, died, at the advanced age of eighty-one, in April, 1814, during the visit of Pius VII. to that city.

The few notices of the Abate Mezzofanti which we have met up to this period, are derived almost exclusively from Bolognese, or at least Italian sources. During the long continental war, the ordinary intercourse with Italy was, in great part, suspended, and few tourists, especially of the literary class, visited the north of Italy. But the cessation of hostilities in the spring of 1814, re-opened the long interrupted

* Memorandum in the archives of the University of Bologna.

communication, and the annual stream of visitors to Rome and Naples again began to flow, with its wonted regularity, through the cities of the north. Few of the tourists who published an account of their travels at this date failed to devote some of their pages to one who had now become one of the chief "sights" of his native city. It is hardly necessary to say, that, in some instances, these accounts are but the echoes of popular fame, and exhibit the usual amount of ignorance, credulity, and superficial information, which characterise "travellers' tales." But very many, also, will be found to contain the judgment of acute, learned, and impartial observers; many of them are the result of a careful and jealous scrutiny of Mezzofanti's attainments, made by critics of indisputable capacity; most of them will be admitted to be of unquestionable value, as to one point at least—Mezzofanti's familiarity with the native language of each particular traveller; and all, even the least solid among them, are interesting, as presenting to us, with the freshness of contemporary narrative, the actual impressions received by the writer from his opportunities of personal intercourse with the great linguist.

I have collected from many sources, published* and unpublished, a variety of these travellers' notices, which I shall use freely in illustrating the narrative

* Many of these will be found in Mr. Watts's interesting paper read before the Philological Society, January 23, 1852: "On the Extraordinary Powers of Cardinal Mezzofanti as a Linguist." Some other notices, not contained in that Paper, have since been kindly pointed out to me by the same gentleman. I have been enabled to add several, hitherto unpublished, certainly not inferior in authority and interest to any of the published testimonies.

of the remaining years of the life of Mezzofanti. I shall be careful, however, in all that regards the critical portion of the biography, and especially in estimating the actual extent of Mezzofanti's linguistic attainments, only to rely, for each language, on the authority of one who, either as a native, or at least an unquestioned proficient in that particular language, will be admitted to be a perfectly competent judge in its regard.

The autumn of the year 1814 supplies one such notice, which is remarkable, as the first direct testimony to Mezzofanti's proficiency in speaking German. He had learned this language in boyhood ; and it is clear from his letters to De Rossi, and from the books to which he freely refers in that correspondence, that he was intimately acquainted with it as a language of books. But in this year we are able for the first time to test his power of speaking German by the judgment of a native.

The writer in question is a German tourist, named Kephalides, professor in the University of Breslau,* who (as may be inferred from his alluding to the Congress of Vienna, as just opened) visited Bologna in the October or November of 1814. "The Professor Abate Mezzofanti," writes this traveller, who met him in the Library, "speaks German with extraordinary fluency, although he has never been out of Bologna. He is a warm admirer, too, of the literature of Germany, especially its poetry ; and he has stirred up the same enthusiasm among the educated classes in

* He is so described by Baron Zach, (Correspondance Astronomique, IV. 145,) who commends the work highly.

Bologna, both gentlemen and ladies."* We learn incidentally, too, from this writer's narrative, that German was among the languages which Mezzofanti taught to his private pupils. In a rather interesting account of an interview which he had with old Father Emmanuel Aponte, (one of Mezzofanti's first instructors,) and with the celebrated lady-professor of Greek, so often referred to, Clotilda Tambroni, Kephalides mentions that the youth whom Mezzofanti sent to conduct him to Aponte was one of his own pupils, who had just begun to "lisp German." Strangely enough, nevertheless, Kephalides does not allude to any other of Mezzofanti's languages, nor even to his general reputation as a linguist of more than ordinary attainments.

In the commencement of the year 1815, the chief Librarianship of the University became vacant by the death of Father Pompilio Pozzetti. Pozzetti was one of the congregation of the *Scuole Pie*, and in earlier life had been Librarian of that Ducal Library at Modena, which Tiraboschi has made familiar to every student of Italian literature. From the time of his appointment as Prefect of the Bologna Library, a close intimacy had subsisted between him and Mezzofanti; and on the latter's

* Kephalides, "Reise durch Italien und Sicilien," vol I. p. 28. The book is in two volumes, and has no date. The above passage is quoted in Vulpius's singular miscellany, "Curiositäten der physisch-literarisch-artistisch-historischen Vor-und Mit-welt. Vol. X. p. 422. The Article contains nothing else of interest regarding Mezzofanti; but it alludes to some curious examples of extraordinary powers of memory.

being named his assistant, this intimacy ripened into a warm friendship. Mezzofanti was at once appointed as his successor, on the 25th of April, 1815.* In the letter in which (May 15th,) he communicated his appointment to his friend, Pezzana, who held the kindred office at Parma, he speaks in terms of the highest praise of his predecessor and of the services which he had rendered during his tenure of office, and deplores his death as a serious loss to the institution.

The revenue of this office, which he held conjointly with his professorship, (although both salaries united amounted to a very moderate sum)† placed the Abate Mezzofanti in comparatively easy circumstances, and for the first time above the actual struggle for daily bread. That he still continued, nevertheless, to instruct pupils in private, need hardly be matter of surprise, when it is remembered that, as we have seen, the support of no less than ten individuals was dependent upon his exertions.‡

Indeed, once released from the sordid cares and excessive drudgery of tuition to which his earlier years had been condemned,—

> The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
> Which patient merit of the unworthy takes—

the exercise of teaching was to him rather an enjoy-

* MS. Memorandum in the University Archives.

† The exact amount I am unable to state. But that, according to our notions, it was very humble, may be inferred from the fact that, in the same University and but a short time before, Giordani's income from the united offices of Lecturer on Latin and Italian Eloquence and Assistant Librarian, was but 1800 francs. See his Life by Gussalli, "*Opere*," Vol. I., p. 19.

‡ MS. Memorandum in the University Archives.

ment than a labour. After his removal to the Vatican Library, and even after his elevation to the Cardinalate, we shall find it his chief, if not his only, relaxation. Few men have possessed in a higher degree the power of winning at once the confidence and the love of a pupil. The perfect simplicity of his character—his exceeding gentleness—the cheerful playfulness of his manner—the total absence of any seeming consciousness of superior attainments—his evident enjoyment of the society of the young, and above all the unaffected goodness and kindness of his disposition, attracted the love of his youthful friends, as much as his marvellous accomplishments challenged their admiration. It is only just to add that he repaid the affection which he thus invariably won from them by the liveliest interest in all that regarded their progress, and a sincere concern for their happiness which followed them in every stage of their after life.

By degrees, too, he was beginning, in the natural advance of years, to enjoy the best fruit of the labour of instruction, in the success, and even distinction, attained by his quondam pupils. One of these to whom he was especially attached, the young Marchese Angelelli, had passed through the University with much honour; and, in the beginning of 1815, published anonymously a metrical translation of the Electra of Sophocles, which met with very marked favour. Mezzofanti who was much gratified by the success of this first essay, communicated to his friend Pezzana the secret of the authorship.

"I send you," he writes, May 8, 1815, "a first essay in translation from the Greek, published by an able pupil of mine, whose modesty has not permitted him to put his name to his work. From you, however, I make no secret of it. The author is one of our young nobles, the Marchese Maximilian Francis Angelelli, an indefatigable cultivator of every liberal study. I may add, as there is no danger of its reaching the ears of the modest translator, that this first effort is only the beginning of greater things. You will accept a copy for yourself, and place the other in your library, which I am happy to know grows daily, both in extent and reputation, through the care of its librarian, no less than by his distinguished name."

This first essay of the young poet was followed in the next year by a further publication, containing the Electra, the Antigone, and the Trachiniæ; and, a few years later, his master had the gratification of witnessing the successful completion of his favourite pupil's task, by the publication of the entire seven tragedies of Sophocles, in 1823-4.*

One effect of Mezzofanti's appointment as librarian was to separate him somewhat from his sister and her family. He occupied thenceforward the apartments of the librarian in the Palace of the University. But he still continued towards them the same affectionate protection and support. Hitherto he had himself in part

* "Tragedie di Sofocle, recate in Versi Italiani da Massimo Angelelli." 2 vols., 4to. Bologna, 1823-4. This translation is highly commended by Federici, in his "Notizie degli Scrittori Greci e delle Versioni Italiane delle loro Opere," p. 95.

superintended or directed the education of his nephews, and especially of his namesake Joseph, a youth of much promise, whose diligence and success fully requited his uncle's care. Joseph had made choice of the ecclesiastical profession; and, although falling far short of his uncle's extraordinary gift, he became an excellent linguist, and was especially distinguished as a Greek and Latin scholar; so that his uncle had the satisfaction, when his own increasing occupations compelled him to diminish the number of his pupils, of finding the young Minarelli fully competent to undertake a portion of the charge.

His first public appearance at the Academy after he entered upon his new office, was for the purpose of reading, (July 11th, 1815,) a paper "On the Wallachian Language and its Analogies with Latin;"—a subject which has engaged the attention of philologers and historians from the days of Chalcocondylas, and which involves many interesting ethnological, as well as philological considerations.* As we shall find him, a few years later, astonishing a German visitor by his familiarity with this out-of-the-way language, it is worth while to note this essay, as an evidence that here, too, his knowledge was the result of careful study, and not of casual opportunity, or of sudden inspiration.

For a considerable time after he took charge of the Library, he seems to have been much occupied by his duties in connexion with it. The only letter which

* See Adelung's "Mithridates," II., 723—30. I refer to this passage particularly, as explaining the peculiar difficulty which Wallachian, as a spoken language, presents to a foreigner, from *its close resemblance to other languages.*

I have been able to obtain about this period, one addressed to Pezzana, March 5th, 1816, is entirely occupied with details regarding the library; and M. Manavit mentions that he not only obtained from the authorities a considerable addition to the funds appropriated to the purchase of books, but, moreover, devoted no trifling share of his own humble resources to the same purpose.* In the course of a few months, too, he was quite at ease in his new pursuit ; and the familiarity with the contents of the library, and even of the position of particular books upon its shelves which he soon possessed, would, in a person of less prodigious memory, have been a subject of wonder. His nephew, Cavaliere Minarelli of Bologna, was present on one occasion when Professor Ranzani, while passing an evening in the librarian's apartments, happened to require some rare volume from the library ; and, though it was dark at the time, Mezzofanti left the room without a light, proceeded to the library, and in a few moments returned with the volume required.

In July, 1816, Mezzofanti read at the Academy an essay "on the Language of the Sette Communi at Vicenza," which has been spoken of with much praise. This singular community—descended from those stragglers of the invading army of Cimbri and Teutones which crossed the Alps in the year of Rome, 640, who escaped amid the almost complete extermination of their companions under Marius, and took refuge in the neighbouring mountains—presents, (like the similar Roman colony on the Transylvanian border,) the strange

* Manavit, p. 37.

phenomenon of a foreign race and language preserved unmixed in the midst of another people and another tongue for a space of nearly two thousand years. They occupy seven parishes in the vicinity of Vicenza,* whence their name is derived; and they still retain not only the tradition of their origin, but the substance, and even the leading forms of the Teutonic language; insomuch that Frederic IV., of Denmark, who visited them in the beginning of the last century, (1708,) discoursed with them in Danish, and found their idiom perfectly intelligible.†

This was a theme peculiarly suited to Mezzofanti's powers. His essay excited considerable interest at the time, but unfortunately was never printed.

* Besides the *Sette Communi* of Vicenza, there are also thirteen parishes in the province of Verona, called the *Tredici Communi*;—evidently of the same Teutonic stock, and a remnant of the same Roman slaughter. Adelung (II., 215) gives a specimen of each language. Both are perfectly intelligible to any German scholar: but that of Verona resembles more nearly the modern form of the German language. The affinity is much more closely preserved in both, than it is in the analogous instance of the Roman colony in Transylvania. I may be permitted to refer to the very similar example of an isolated race and language which subsisted *among ourselves* down to the last generation, in the Baronies of Forth and Bargie in the county of Wexford in Ireland. The remnant of the first English or Welsh adventurers under Strongbow, who obtained lands in that district, maintained themselves, through a long series of generations, distinct in manners, usages, costume, and even language, both from the Irish population, and, what is more remarkable, from the *English settlers of all subsequent periods*. An essay on their peculiar dialect, with a vocabulary and a metrical specimen, by Vallancey, will be found in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. II. (Antiquities), pp. 194-3.

† Eustace's Classical Tour in Italy, I., 142. The fact of Frederic's visit is mentioned by Maffei, in his Verona Illustrata.

CHAPTER VI.

[1817-1820.]

Southey, in one of his pleasant gossiping letters to Bedford, tells that when M. de Sagrie was going to publish a French translation of Southey's "Roderick," his publisher, Le Bel, insisted upon having a life of the poet prefixed. M. de Sagrie objected; and at last, in order to get rid of the printer's importunities, said that he knew nothing whatever of the life of Mr. Southey. "N'importe!" was the printer's cool reply, "Ecrivez toujours, brodez! Brodez-la un peu; que ce soit vrai ou non, ce ne fait rien."*

We have come to a part of Mezzofanti's quiet and uniform life in which there are so few incidents to break the monotony of the uneventful narrative, that, at least in so far as its interest is concerned, his biographer is almost in the same condition with M. de Sagrie. The true purpose of this narrative, however —to exhibit the faculty rather than the man—seems

* Memoirs of Robert Southey, Vol. V., p. 60.

to me to depend less on the accumulation of piquant anecdotes and striking adventures, than upon a calm and truthful survey of his intellectual attainments in the successive stages of his career. Instead, therefore, of having recourse to the device suggested by De Sagrie's enterprising publisher, and supplying, by a little ingenious "broderie," the deficiency of exciting incident, I shall content myself with weaving together, in the order of time, the several notices of Mezzofanti, by travellers and others, which have come within my reach; interspersing such explanations, incidents, illustrations, and anecdotes, as I have been able to glean, among the scanty memorials of this period which have survived. Fortunately, from the year which we have now reached, there exists a tolerably connected series of such sketches. They are, of course, from the most various hands—from authors

> of all tongues and creeds;—
> Some were those who counted beads,
> Some of mosque, and some of church,
> And some, or I mis-say, of neither;—

but their value, it need hardly be said, is enhanced by this very variety. Proceeding from so many independent sources, produced for the most part, too, upon the spot, and in the order of time in which they appear in the narrative;—these unconnected sketches may be believed to present, if a less minute and circumstantial, certainly a more vivid as well as more reliable, portraiture of Mezzofanti, than could be hoped even from the daily scrutiny of familiar friends, intimately conversant with his every day life,

but always viewing his character from the same unvarying point, and rather submitting the result of their own matured observations of what Mezzofanti seemed to them to be, than affording materials for a calm and dispassionate estimate of what he really was. Nor must it be forgotten that no single chronicler, even had he the circumstantiality of a Boswell, could be capable of keeping a record of Mezzofanti's life, which could be available as the foundation of a satisfactory judgment as to the real extent and nature of his linguistic accomplishment. It is only another Mezzofanti who would be a competent witness on such a question ; and, in default of a single Polyglot critic of his attainments in all the languages which he is supposed to have known, we shall best consult the interests of truth and science, by considering severally, in reference to each of these languages, the judgment formed regarding his performance therein by those whose native language it was.

I have already said that the office of librarian brought him into contact with most of the strangers, especially of the literary class, who visited Bologna. In Bolognese society, too, he was more courted and sought after than his modest and retiring disposition would have desired. In the house of the Cardinal-Archbishop Opizzoni, and of the Cardinal Legates, Lanti, and Spina, he was always an honoured guest. With several of the noble families of the city, especially the Marescalchi, the Angelelli, the Amerini, and the Zambeccari, he lived on terms of the closest intimacy. The Cavaliere Pezzana mentions that when, on a visit to

Bologna in 1817, he was dining at the first named palace, Mezzofanti came in uninvited, and almost as one of the family. At all these houses his opportunities of meeting foreigners of every race and language may easily be believed to have been frequent, and of the most various character.

The earliest English visitor of the Abate Mezzofanti whom I have been able to discover is Mr. Harford, author of the recent "Life of Michael Angelo Buonarroti,"* and proprietor of the valuable gallery of Blaise Castle, which Dr. Waagen describes in his "Treasures of Art in England."†

Mr. Harford visited Bologna in the autumn of 1817, at which time he first made Mezzofanti's acquaintance. He renewed the acquaintance subsequently at Rome, and on both occasions had a full opportunity of observing and of testing his extraordinary gift of language. Mr. Harford has kindly communicated to me his recollections of Mezzofanti at both these periods of life, which, (although the latter part anticipates the order of time by nearly thirty years,) may most naturally be inserted together.

"I first made the acquaintance of the Abbé Mezzofanti," writes Mr. Harford, "at the table of Cardinal Lanti, brother of the Duke of Lanti, then Legate of Bologna. This was in the year 1817. The Cardinal was then living at the public palace at Bologna, but I had previously known him in Rome. He was a man of highly cultivated mind, and of gentlemanly and agreeable manners. He made his guests perfectly at their ease, and I well

* Life of Michael Angelo Buonarroti, 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1857.

† Treasures of Art in England. By Dr. Waagen. Vol. III., pp. 187-94.

recollect, after dinner, forming one of a group around Abbé Mezzofanti, and listening with deep interest to his animated conversation, which had reference, in consequence of questions put to him, to various topics, illustrating his wonderful acquaintance with the principal languages of the world. Report, at this time, gave him credit for being master of upwards of forty languages; and I recollect, among other things, his giving proof of his familiar acquaintance with the Welsh. I had some particular conversation with him upon the origin of what is called Saxon, Norman, and Lombard architecture, and I remember his entire accordance with the opinion I threw out, that it resolved itself in each case into a corruption of Roman architecture.

"My next interview with him was after a long lapse of time, for I did not meet him again till the year 1846, the winter of which I passed in Rome. The Abbé was then changed into the Cardinal Mezzofanti. I found him occupying a handsome suite of apartments in a palazzo in the Piazza Santi Apostoli. He assured me he well remembered meeting Mrs. H. and myself at Cardinal Lanti's, on the occasion above referred to; and in the course of several visits which I paid him during the winter and ensuing spring, his conversation was always animated and agreeable. He conversed with me in English, which he spoke with the utmost fluency and correctness, and only with a slight foreign accent. His familiar knowledge of our provincial dialects quite surprised me. 'Do you know much of the Yorkshire dialect?' he said to me: and then, with much humour, gave me various specimens of its peculiarities; 'and your *Zummersetshire* dialect,' he went on to say, laughing as he spoke, and imitating it.

"On another occasion he spoke to me with high admiration of the style of Addison, preferring it to that of any English author with whom he was acquainted. He commended its ease, elegance, and grace; and then contrasted it with the grandiloquence of Johnson, whose powerful mind and copious fancy he also greatly admired, though he deemed him much inferior in real wit and taste to Addison. In all this I fully agreed with him; and then inquired whether he had ever read Boswell's Life of Johnson, and, finding he had not, I told him he must allow me to send it

to him, as I felt assured, from the interest he displayed in our English literature, it would much amuse and delight him. This promise I subsequently fulfilled.*

"Speaking to me about an English lady with whom I was well acquainted, he eagerly inquired, '*Is she a blue-stocking?*'

"He one day talked to me about the Chinese language and its difficulties, and told me that some time back a gentleman who had resided in China visited him. 'I concluded,' he added, 'that I might address him in Chinese, and did so;—but, after exchanging a few sentences with me, he begged that we might pursue our conversation in French. We talked, however, long enough for me to discover that he spoke in *the Canton dialect.*'

"That one who had never set his foot out of Italy should be thus able in an instant to detect the little peculiarities of dialect in a man who had lived in China, did, I acknowledge, strike me with astonishment.

"This sort of critical sagacity in languages enabled the Cardinal to render important services to the Propaganda College at Rome, in which he held a high office. I was not only struck with the fluency, but with the rapidity with which he spoke the English language, and, I might also add, the idiomatic correctness of his expressions.

"So much of celebrity attached itself to his name that foreigners of distinction gladly sought occasions of making his acquaintance. On being ushered into his presence on one of my visits I found him surrounded by a large party of admirers, including several ladies, who all appeared highly delighted with his animated conversation."

We shall have other opportunities of adverting to his curiously minute acquaintance, not only with English literature, but even with the provincial dialects of English, by which Mr. Harford was so much struck. But, as some difference of opinion has

* I find the work (Croker's Edition, London, 1847) in the Catalogue of the "Libreria Mezzofanti," p. 72.

been expressed with regard to his acquaintance with Welsh, I think it right to note the circumstance that Mr. Harford distinctly remembers him, as early as 1817, to have given "proofs of familiar acquaintance" with that language.*

Somewhat later in the same year, November, 1817, Mr. Stewart Rose visited Mezzofanti. The ordeal to which his linguistic powers were submitted in Mr. Rose's presence was more severe and more varied than that witnessed by Mr. Harford; the former having heard him tried in German, Greek, and Turkish, as well as in English. But as we shall have abundant independent testimony for each of these, Mr. Rose's testimony is specially important, as recording the exceeding accuracy of Mezzofanti's English, which he tested by "long and repeated conversations."

"As this country," he writes, "has been fertile in every variety of genius, from that which handles the pencil to that which sweeps the skies with the telescope; so even in this, her least favourite beat, she has produced men who, in early life, have embraced such a circle of languages, as one should hardly imagine their ages would have enabled them to obtain. Thus the wonders which are related of one of these, Pico di Mirandola, I always considered fabulous, till I was myself the witness of acquisitions which can scarcely be considered less extraordinary.

* I may add that, in order to guard against any possible misapprehension of Mr. Harford's opinion, I called his attention to the doubt which has arisen on the subject. In reply Mr. Harford assured me that he himself heard Mezzofanti *speak* Welsh at his first visit to Bologna, in 1817.

"The living lion to whom I allude is Signor Mezzofanti of Bologna, who when I saw him, though he was only thirty-six years old, read twenty and wrote eighteen languages. This is the least marvellous part of the story. He spoke all these fluently, and those of which I could judge with the most extraordinary precision. I had the pleasure of dining with him formerly in the house of a Bolognese lady, at whose table a German officer declared he could not have distinguished him from a German. He passed the whole of the next day with G—— and myself, and G—— told me he should have taken him for an Englishman, who had been some time out of England. A Smyrniote servant who was with me, bore equal testimony to his skill in other languages, and declared he might pass for a Greek or a Turk in the dominions of the Grand Seignior. But what most surprised me was his accuracy; for, during long and repeated conversations in English, he never once misapplied the *sign* of a tense, that fearful stumblingblock to Scotch and Irish, in whose writings there is always to be found some abuse of these undefinable niceties. The marvel was, if possible, rendered more marvellous by this gentleman's accomplishments and information, things rare in linguists, who generally mistake the means for the end. It ought also to be stated that his various acquisitions had all been made in Bologna, from which, when I saw him, he had never wandered above thirty miles."*

* Letters from the North of Italy, Vol. II., p. 54.

Mr. Rose was mistaken in supposing that Mezzofanti at this time was but thirty-six years old. He was in reality forty-three; but the testimony which he bears to his "general accomplishments and information" will be found to be confirmed by very many succeeding travellers.

It was earlier in the same year, probably in June, on his return from Rome to Venice,* that Lord Byron first saw Mezzofanti. The extract given by Moore from his Journal, in which he describes the impressions made upon him by their intercourse has no date attached; but as he also alludes to Mezzofanti as among "the great names of Italy" in the Dedication of the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold, which is dated January, 2nd, 1818, it would seem likely that he had met him at least before that date.† Of the particulars of their intercourse no record is preserved; but Mezzofanti always spoke with profound interest of his noble visitor. He was perfectly familiar with his poetry. The late Dr. Cox of Southampton assured me that his criticism of the several poems, and especially of Childe Harold, would do credit to our best reviews. And he often expressed the deepest regret for the early and unhappy fate, by which this gifted man was called away while he still lay in the shadow of that cold and gloomy scepticism which so often marred his better impulses, and—

* See Life, IV., p. 32. He had not visited Bologna in the interval.

† Perhaps it might be inferred from the false spelling of the name —the use of *ph* for *f*—(a blunder which violates so fundamental a rule of Italian orthography as to betray a mere tyro in the study) that this passage was penned soon after Byron's arrival in Italy. But Byron's orthography was never a standard.

Flung o'er all that's warm and bright,
The winter of an icy creed.

"Alas!" he one day said to M. Manavit, "that desolating scepticism which had long oppressed his soul, was not natural to such a mind. Sooner or later he would have awakened from it. And then it only remained for him to open the most glorious page in his Childe Harold's adventurous Pilgrimage—that in which, reviewing all his doubts, his struggles, and his sorrows, and laying bare the deep wounds of his haughty soul, he should have sought rest from them all in the peaceful bosom of the faith of his fathers."*

Such a feeling as this on the part of Mezzofanti gives a melancholy interest to the well-known passage, half laughing, half admiring, in which Byron records his recollections of the great linguist.

"In general," he says, "I do not draw well with literary men;—not that I dislike them; but I never knew what to say to them, after I have praised their last publication. There are several exceptions, to be sure; but then they have either been men of the world, such as Scott and Moore, &c., or visionaries out of it, such as Shelley, &c.; but your literary every-day man and I never met well in company;—especially your foreigners, whom I never could abide, except Giordani, &c., &c., &c., (I really can't name any other.) I don't remember a man amongst them whom I ever wished to see twice, except perhaps Mezzophanti, who is a monster of languages, the Briareus of parts of speech, a walking polyglot, and more;—who ought to have existed at the time of the

* Manavit, p. 106.

Tower of Babel, as universal interpreter.* He is, indeed, a marvel—unassuming also. I tried him in all the tongues in which I knew a single oath or adjuration to the gods, against post-boys, savages, Tartars, boatmen, sailors, pilots, gondoliers, muleteers, camel-drivers, vetturini, post-masters, post-houses, post, everything; and egad! he astounded me—even to my English."

The Abbé Gaume adds, in reference to the last of these languages, an anecdote still current in Rome, though doubtless a mere exaggeration† of the real story; viz., that, "when Byron had exhausted his vocabulary of English slang, Mezzofanti quietly asked: 'And is that all?'

* Life and Works, IV., 262-3. It may be worth while to note this curious and characteristic passage, as an example of what Byron has been so often charged with—unacknowledged, (and perhaps unconscious) plagiarisms from authors or works which are but little known. The idea of "a universal interpreter at the time of the tower of Babel," is copied literally from Pope's metrical version of the second satire of Dr. Donne, to the hero of which the same illustration is applied, in exactly the same way.

"Thus others' talents having nicely shown,
He came by sure transition to his own;
Till I cried out: 'You prove yourself so able,
Pity you was not druggerman [dragoman] *at Babel!*
For had they found a linguist half so good,
I make no question but the Tower had stood.'"

† Yet not without foundation in fact. My friend Mr. James E. Doyle, was assured by the late Dr. Charles R. Walsh (an English surgeon of great ability, who fell a victim to his exertions as an officer of the Board of Health, during the last cholera in London), that he once heard Mezzofanti "doing" the slang of a London cabman in great perfection.

'I can go no further.' replied the noble poet, 'unless I coin words for the purpose.'

'Pardon me, my Lord,' rejoined Mezzofanti; and proceeded to repeat for him a variety of the refinements of London slang, till then unknown to his visitor's rich vocabulary!" *

During the winter of 1817-8, a literary society was formed in Bologna for the cultivation of poetry and the publication of literary and scientific essays, of which Mezzofanti was appointed president.

The original members of this body were twenty-one in number, and included Ranzani, Angelelli, Mezzofanti's nephew, Giuseppe Minarelli, several professors, both of the University, and of the Academia delle Belle Arti, and some literary noblemen and gentlemen of the city. They met occasionally for readings and recitations; and printed a serial collection, called *Opuscoli Letterarj di Bologna.* I had hopes of learning something from the records of this society, or from the recollections of its members, which might tend to illustrate the history of Mezzofanti's studies at this period: but, unhappily, not a single original member of the society is now living; and their only publication available for the purposes of this biography is Mezzofanti's own *Discorso in Lode del P. Aponte;*— his solitary publication, which was printed in the *Opuscoli Letterarj*, in 1820.

Mezzofanti continued, even after the formation of this society, to frequent the meetings of the Academy of the Institute. On the 3rd of December, 1818, he

* Gaume, "Les Trois Rome," II., p. 415.

read a paper in this Academy, "on a remarkable Mexican MS., preserved in the Library of the Institute." This paper was most probably the basis of the Essay upon the Mexican Calendar already alluded to. As it entered minutely into the whole subject of the hieroglyphical writings of the Mexicans, and discussed at some length the opinions of all the various writers on Mexican antiquities down to Humboldt, the paper created very considerable interest in the Academy, and was spoken of with praise by the literary journals of the day.*

The visit of the Emperor Francis I. of Austria to Bologna in 1819, contributed still more to establish the reputation of Mezzofanti. Having appointed an interview with him, the Emperor took the precaution of securing during the audience the presence of a number of members of his suite, carefully selected so as to represent the chief languages of the Austrian Empire. Each in turn, German, Magyar, Bohemian, Wallachian, Illyrian, and Pole, took occasion to address the astonished professor; but although naturally somewhat startled by the novelty of the scene, and perhaps abashed by the presence of royalty, he replied with such perfect fluency and correctness to each, "as to extort not merely approval but admiration and applause."†

The year 1819 is further notable as the date of Mezzofanti's only published composition, the above-named panegyric of his early friend and instructor Emanuel Aponte. The death of this excellent and venerable man had occurred more than three years

* Santagata, "Sermones Duo," p. 11.

† Santagata, pp. 19-20.

earlier, (November 22, 1815), and his funeral oration had been pronounced by Filippo Schiassi, the professor of numismatics, as also by Pacifico Deani, whose discourse was translated into Spanish by Don Camillo Salina. Aponte's grateful pupil, nevertheless, took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the opening of the public studies of the university, to offer his own especial tribute to the piety and learning of the good old father, and particularly to the excellence of his method of teaching the Greek language and the merits of a Grammar which he had published for the use of the higher schools.

The Discourse is chiefly occupied (after a sketch of Aponte's life and character) with a criticism of the method pursued in this Grammar,—a criticism chiefly noticeable as embodying the method, (which we know from other sources to have been the speaker's own,) of studying a language rather by rhythm than by rule; "by ascertaining its normal structure, the principle which governs its inflexions, and especially the dominant principle which regulates the changes of letters according to the different organs of speech."

As a specimen of this general manner of the Discourse, I shall translate the concluding paragraphs,—the exhortation to the study of Greek literature with which the professor takes leave of his audience.

"And still shall these studies flourish, my dear young friends, perpetuated by you under the guidance of the instructions which Father Emanuel bequeathed to us. His method, which, in the acquisition of the language, rather exercises the reason than

burdens the memory, and which makes good sense the chief basis for the right interpretation of an author, will assuredly conduct to the desired end that ardour which, on this solemn occasion, you feel renewed within you: an ardour so great that, had I to-day spoken solely of the difficulties and obstacles in the path of learning, it would, nevertheless, give you strength and courage to encounter and overcome them. Well, therefore, may we have confidence in you, and believe that you will preserve to your native land the fame achieved by your forefathers in Grecian studies. These studies are the special inheritance of our countrymen. In Italy the muses of Greece sought an asylum, when they fled before the invader from their ancient glorious abode. Learned Greeks were at that period dispersed through our principal cities, where, establishing schools, they found munificent patrons and zealous pupils. In Rome Grecian literature enjoyed the generous patronage of Nicholas V.; and around Cardinal Bessarion were gathered men of vast erudition, who renewed the lustre of the old Athenian schools, cultivating a wiser philosophy, however, than the ancients employed; and, thanks to the precious volumes accumulated by those two illustrious Mæcenases and by the princes of Italy; thanks to the skill of the masters and the aptitude and excellence of Italian genius, Grecian literature, conjointly with Latin, quickly attained the highest pitch of cultivation amongst us, ushering in the golden age of Italian letters. A countless series of names distinguished in this branch of learning presents itself before me: but I delight rather to consider in prospect the future series which begins in you. Be not disturbed by any fear that the pursuit to which I am exhorting you will hinder the profounder study of the sciences. Alas, very different are the thoughts, very different, indeed, the cares which distract the mind of youth and turn its generous fervour aside, miserably disappointing the bright hopes that were formed of it. No: theologians, lawyers, philosophers, physicians, mathematicians, all men of science and learning, have ever found in the Greek literature their most agreeable solace. Many of the sciences had, in Greece, early reached a high degree of perfection; others made a noble beginning in that country; most of them are embellished

with titles borrowed from its language; and all of them have recourse to Greek when they wish, with precision and dignity, to denominate, and thereby to define, the objects of their consideration. 'These studies,' says one who owed much of his eloquence to the industry with which he cultivated them, 'furnish youth with profitable and delightful knowledge; they amuse maturer years; they adorn prosperity, and in adversity afford an asylum from care; they delight us in the quiet of home, and are no hindrance in affairs of the gravest moment; they discover for us many a useful thing; for the traveller they procure the regard of strangers, and, in the solitude of the country, they solace the mind with the purest of pleasures.' Let your main study, then, be the sterner sciences; Greek shall follow as a faithful companion, affording you useful assistance therein as well as delightful recreation. And thus, thinking of nothing else, having nothing else at heart, than religion and learning, let the expectations of your friends and of your country be fulfilled in you. Thus shall you correspond with the paternal designs of our best of princes, His Holiness, the Sovereign Pontiff, who, in his munificence and splendour, daily enlarges the dignity of this illustrious University, promoting, by wise provisions, your education and your glory. And, whilst you vigorously prosecute the career so well begun, while your love for Greek increases with the increasing profit you derive from it, I, too, will exult in your brilliant progress. To this I will look for a monument, truly durable and immortal, of my dear Father Emanuel, to whom I feel myself bound by eternal gratitude; since gratitude, reverence, and devotion are surely due to them who, by example and by precept, point out to us the road to virtue and to learning, inviting and exhorting us, with loving solicitude, to direct our lives to praiseworthy pursuits and to true happiness."* (pp. 22-26.)

* Bologna, 1820.—It was on the occasion of the celebration of Father Aponte's "Jubilee"—the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination as priest—that Mezzofanti addressed to him the Hebrew Psalm which will be found in the Appendix.

Soon after the death of Father Aponte, Mezzofanti had the further grief of losing his friend, the celebrated Signora Clotilda Tambroni, who, although considerably older than he, had been, as we have seen, his fellow pupil under Father Aponte, and with whom he had ever afterwards continued upon terms of most intimate friendship. Like Mezzofanti, the Signora Tambroni was, after the publication of the concordat, reinstated in the Greek professorship from which she had been dispossessed at the occupation of Bologna by the French. She was an excellent linguist, being familiar with Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, and English,* and a poetess of some reputation, not only in her own, but also in the learned languages.† The Breslau professor, already referred to, Herr Kephalides, was much interested by her conversation; and that the interest which she created did not arise merely from the unusual circumstance of a lady's devoting herself to such studies, but from her own unquestioned learning and ability, is attested by all who knew her. "It was a pleasant thing," says Lady Morgan,‡ "to hear her learned coadjutor [Mezzofanti] in describing to us the good qualities of her heart, do ample justice to the profound learning which had raised her to an equality of collegiate rank with himself, without an innuendo at that erudition, which, in England, is a greater female stigma than vice itself."

* Reise durch Italien, I. p. 30-2.

† Biographie Universelle (Brussels Edition), XIX., 50-1.

‡ Italy, I., 292.

The lively but caustic authoress just named, visited Italy in 1819-20. In her account of Bologna she devotes a note to the Abate Mezzofanti, under whose escort, (which she recognises as a peculiar advantage,) she visited the library and museum of the University.

"The well-known Abate Mezzofanti, librarian to the Institute," she writes, "was of our party. Conversing with this very learned person on the subject of his 'forty languages,' he smiled at the exaggeration, and said, that although he had gone over the outline of forty languages, he was not master of them, as he had dropped such as had not books worth reading. His Greek master, being a Spaniard, taught him Spanish. The German, Polish, Bohemian, and Hungarian tongues he originally acquired during the occupation of Bologna by the Austrian power; and afterwards he had learned French from the French, and English by reading and by conversing with English travellers. With all this superfluity of languages, he spoke nothing but Bolognese in his own family. With us, he always spoke English, and with scarcely any accent, though I believe he has never been out of Bologna. His tone of phrase and peculiar selection of words were those of the 'Spectator;' and it is probable that he was most conversant with the English works of that day. The Abate Mezzofanti was professor of the Greek and Oriental languages under the French: when Buonaparte abolished the Greek professorship, Mezzofanti was pensioned off. He was again made Greek professor by the Austrians, again

set aside by the French, and again restored by the Pope." *

Like most of Lady Morgan's sketches, this account of Mezzofanti, although interesting, is not free from inaccuracies. Thus she falls into the common error already noticed, that Mezzofanti up to this time "had never been out of Bologna," and a still more important mistake as to the cause of his first deprivation of his professorship. He was dispossessed of this professorship, (which, it may be added, was not of Greek but of Arabic,) not because the professorship was suppressed, but because he declined to take the oaths to the new government. The account of his second deprivation is also inaccurate; and the assertion that he never cultivated any languages except those which "had books worth reading," we shall see hereafter, to be entirely without foundation.

The statement too, that "he spoke only Bolognese in his own family" is an exaggeration. With the elder members of the family—his father, his mother, and his sister, Signora Minarelli—it was so; and there was a cousin of his, named Antonia Mezzofanti, a lively and agreeable old dame, and a frequent guest at the house of his sister, to whom he was much attached, and with whom he delighted to converse in the pleasant dialect of Bologna. But the children of his sister were all well educated, and, like the educated classes throughout all the provincial cities of Italy, habitually spoke the common and classical Italian language. Even after Mezzofanti came to Rome, when ques-

* Lady Morgan's Italy, Vol. I., p. 200.

tioned as to the number of languages that he spoke, he often used jestingly to reply: "fifty, and Bolognese."*

Very nearly at the same time with Lady Morgan's interview, Mezzofanti was visited by a tourist far more competent to form a just opinion of the extent of his attainments—M. Molbech, a Danish scholar, author of a Tour in Germany, France, England, and Italy. I shall close the chapter with his testimony. It is chiefly valuable, in reference to his own language, the Danish, in which he had an opportunity of fully testing Mezzofanti's knowledge, in an interview of nearly two hours' duration. It is clear, too, from the very tone of his narrative, that, while he carried away the highest admiration for the extraordinary man whom he had seen, he was by no means disposed to fall into that blind and indiscriminate eulogy of which other less instructed and more imaginative visitors have been accused.

"At last, in the afternoon," he writes, "I succeeded in meeting one of the living wonders of Italy, the librarian Mezzofanti, with whom I had only spoken for a few moments in the gallery,

* This was not a mere joke. The Bolognese dialect has so many peculiarities that, at least by any other than an Italian, it might well deserve to be specially enumerated as a distinct acquisition. It has even a kind of literature of its own;—a comedy of the 16th century, entitled *Filolauro;* a version of the *Gerusalemme Liberata;* and several other works named by Adelung (II., 514). The Bolognese Pater Noster is as follows:—

"Pader noster, ch' si in cil, si pur santifica al voster nom; vegna 'l voster reyn; sia fatta la vostra volontà, com in cil, cosi in terra; 'l noster pan quotidian daz incu: e perdonaz i noster debit, sicom no alteri perdonen ai noster debitur; en c'indusi in Tentazion; ma liberaz da mal. Amen." Adelung, II., 515.

when I passed through Bologna before: I now spent a couple of hours with him, at his lodgings in the university building, and at the library, and would willingly, for his sake alone, have prolonged my stay at Bologna for a couple of days, if I had not been bound by contract with the vetturino as far as Venice. His celebrity must be an inconvenience to him; for scarcely any educated traveller leaves Bologna without having paid him a visit, and the hired guides never omit to mention his name among the first curiosities of the town. This learned Italian, who has never been so far from his birthplace, Bologna, as to Florence or Rome, is certainly one of the world's greatest geniuses in point of languages. I do not know the number he understands, but there is scarcely any European dialect, whether Romanic, Scandinavian, or Slavonic, that this miraculous polyglottist does not speak. It is said the total amounts to more than thirty languages; and among them is that of the gipsies, which he learned to speak from a gipsy who was quartered with an Hungarian regiment at Bologna.

"I found a German with him, with whom he was conversing in fluent and well sounding German; when we were alone, and I began to speak to him in the same language, he interrupted me with a question in Danish, 'Hvorledes har det behaget dem i Italien?' ('How have you been pleased with Italy?') After this, he pursued the conversation in Danish, by his own desire, almost all the time I continued with him, as this, according to his own polite expression, was a pleasure he did not often enjoy; and he spoke the language, from want of exercise, certainly not with the same fluency and ease as English or German, but with almost entire correctness. Imagine my delight at such a conversation! Of Danish books, however, I found in his rich and excellent philological collection no more than Baden's Grammar, and Hallage's Norwegian Vocabulary; and in the library Haldorson's Icelandic Dictionary, in which he made me read him a couple of pages of the preface as a lesson in pronunciation. Our conversation turned mostly on Northern and German literature. The last he is pretty minutely acquainted with; and he is very fond of German poetry, which he has succeeded in bringing into

fashion with the ladies of Bologna, so that Schiller and Goethe, whom the Romans hardly know by name, are here read in the original, and their works are to be had in the library. This collection occupies a finely-built saloon, in which it is arranged in dark presses with wire gratings, and is said to contain about 120,000 volumes. Besides Mezzofanti, there are an under librarian, two assistants, and three other servants. Books are bought to the amount of about 1000 scudi, or more than 200*l.* sterling, a year. Mezzofanti is not merely a linguist, but is well acquainted with literary history and biography, and also with the library under his charge. As an author he is not known, so far as I am aware; and he seems at present to be no older than about forty. I must add, what perhaps would be least expected from a learned man who has been unceasingly occupied with linguistic studies, and has hardly been out of his native town, that he has the finest and most polished manners, and, at the same time, the most engaging goodnature."*

Herr Molbech is still the chief secretary of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. He is one of the most distinguished writers on Danish philology; his great Danish Dictionary† is the classical authority on the language; and, in recognition of his great literary merits, he has been created a privy councillor and a commander of the Dannebrog order.

* Molbech's Reise giennem en Deel af Tydskland, Frankrige England, og Italien, i Aarene 1819 og 1820, vol. iii. p. 319, and following.

† The *Danske Ordbog;* first published in Copenhagen in 1833. The veteran author, now in his seventy-first year, is actively employed in preparing a new edition with large additions and improvements.

CHAPTER VII.

[1820-1823.]

MEZZOFANTI'S regular studies suffered some interruption in the early part of 1820. Debilitated by the excessive and protracted application which has been described, his health had for some time been gradually giving way, and at last he was peremptorily ordered to suspend his lectures, and to discontinue his private studies for six months.* During this interval he employed himself chiefly in botanizing, a study in which he is said to have made considerable progress. He also made a short excursion to the beautiful district of Mantua, and afterwards to Modena, Pisa, and Leghorn.† In the course of this journey he found an opportunity of making himself acquainted with the Hebrew Psalmody as followed in the modern synagogues, and with the practical system of accentuation of the ancient Hebrew Language now in use among the Jews of Italy. The object of his

* Manavit, p. 50 † Ibid, p. 51.

visit to Leghorn was, that, from the Greek sailors of that port, he might acquire the pronunciation of modern Romaic.*

After a short time his health was perfectly restored, with the exception of a certain debility of sight from which he never afterwards completely recovered; and he resumed his ordinary duties in the university about the middle of the year 1820.

The solar eclipse of the 20th of September in that year attracted many scientific visitors to Bologna and the neighbouring cities. Being annular in that region, the eclipse was watched with especial interest by all the astronomers of Northern Italy, by Plana at Turin, by Santini at Padua, by Padre Inghirami at Florence, and by Padre Tinari at Siena. At Bologna the director of the observatory at this time was Pietro Caturegli, editor of the Bolognese *Efemeridi Astronomiche*, and one of Mezzofanti's most valued friends.

Caturegli's reputation and the excellent condition of his observatory, induced the celebrated Hungarian Astronomer, Baron Von Zach, who, after a career of much and varied adventure, was at that time engaged in editing at Genoa the Correspondance Astronomique, (a French continuation of his former German Journal *Monatliche Correspondenz für Erz-und Himmels-Kunde*,) to select Bologna as the place from which to observe this interesting phenomenon. He was accompanied by a Russian nobleman, Prince Vol-

* Letter of the Abate Matranga, dated August 17, 1855.

konski, a man of highly cultivated literary and scientific tastes, and by Captain Smyth of H. M. Ship, *Aid*, who had just completed his survey of the Ionian Islands. Notwithstanding numerous and urgent applications from other quarters, these three distinguished foreigners, together with his friend Mezzofanti, were the only persons whom Caturegli admitted to the observatory during his observations of the eclipse.

The Baron published in his Journal* a very full account of the phenomena of the eclipse, to which he appended as a note the following sketch of his companion on the occasion.

"The annular eclipse of the sun," he writes, "was one curiosity for us, and Signor Mezzofanti was another. This extraordinary man is really a rival of Mithridates; he speaks thirty-two languages, living and dead, in the manner I am going to describe. He accosted me in Hungarian, and with a compliment so well turned, and in such excellent Magyar, that I was quite taken by surprise and stupefied. He afterwards spoke to me in German, at first in good Saxon (the *Crusca* of the Germans,) and then in the Austrian and Swabian dialects, with a correctness of accent that amazed me to the last degree, and made me burst into a fit of laughter at the thought of the contrast between the language and the appearance of this astonishing professor. He spoke English to Captain Smyth, Russian and Polish to Prince Volkonski, not stuttering and stammering, but with the same volubility as if he had been speaking his mother tongue, the dialect of Bologna. I was quite unable to tear myself away from him. At a dinner at the cardinal legate's, Della Spina, his eminence placed me at table next him; after having chatted with him in

* Correspondance Astronomique, February 20. The reader may be puzzled at this seemingly anticipatory date; but the issue of the journal was extremely irregular, and the February number was in reality not published till after September in that year.

several languages, all of which he spoke much better than I did, it came into my head to address to him on a sudden some words of Wallachian. Without hesitation, and without appearing to remark what an out-of-the-way dialect I had branched off to, off went my polyglot in the same language, and so fast, that I was obliged to say to him; 'Gently, gently, Mr. Abbé; I really can't follow you; I am at the end of my Latin-Wallachian.' It was more than forty years since I had spoken the language, or even thought of it, though I knew it very well in my youth, when I served in an Hungarian regiment, and was in garrison at Transylvania. The professor was not only more ready in the language than I, but he informed me on this occasion, that he knew another tongue that I had never been able to get hold of, though I had enjoyed better opportunities of doing so than he, as I formerly had men that spoke it in my regiment.

"This was the language of the Zigans, or Gipsies, whom the French so improperly call Bohemians, at which the good and genuine Bohemians, that is to say, the inhabitants of the kingdom of Bohemia, are not a little indignant. But how could an Italian abbé, who had never been out of his native town, find means to learn a language that is neither written nor printed? In the Italian wars an Hungarian regiment was in garrison at Bologna: the language-loving professor discovered a gipsy in it, and made him his teacher; and, with the facility and happy memory that nature has gifted him with, he was soon master of the language, which, it is believed, is nothing but a dialect, and a corrupted one into the bargain, of some tribes of Parias of Hindostan."*

The wide and peculiar circulation of the journal in which this interesting sketch appeared, contributed more than any previous notice to extend the fame of Mezzofanti. As might naturally be expected, however, details so marvellous, were received with considerable incredulity by some, and were explained away by others as mere embellishments of a traveller's tale.

* Correspondance Astronomique, vol. iv. p.p. 191-2.

In consequence, Von Zach, in a subsequent number of his journal, not only reiterated the statement, but added fuller and more interesting particulars regarding it.

"Many persons have doubted," he writes, "what we said of this astonishing professor of Bologna in our fourth volume; as there have also been persons who doubted what Valerius Maximus relates of the analogous talents of Cyrus and Mithridates. Although all historians have the character of being a little given to lying, Valerius, notwithstanding, passes for a sufficiently veracious author. He says in the eighth book and 9th chapter of his History, or rather of his Compendium of History: *Cyrus omnium militum suorum nomina, Mithridates duarum et viginti gentium quæ sub regno ejus erant linguas, ediscendo.* People who came several centuries after, and who probably did not know more than one language, and possibly not even that one correctly, have pretended that the twenty-two languages of Mithridates were only different dialects, and that Cyrus only knew the names of his generals. It may be so; we know nothing of the reality, and consequently shall not contradict those critics; but what we do know is, that Signor Mezzofanti speaks very good German, Hungarian, Slavonic, Wallachian, Russian, Polish, French and English. I have mentioned my authorities. It has been said that Prince Volkonski and Captain Smyth gave their testimony in favour of this wonderful professor, out of politeness only. But I asked the prince alone, how the professor spoke Russian, and he told me he should be very glad if his own son spoke it as well. The child spoke English and French better than Russian, having always been in foreign countries with his father. The captain said, 'the professor speaks English better than I do; we sailors knock the language to pieces on board our vessels, where we have Scotch and Irish, and foreigners of all sorts; there is often an odd sort of jargon spoken in a ship; the professor speaks with correctness, and even with elegance; it is easy to see that he has studied the language.'

"M. Mezzofanti came one day to see me at the hotel where I was staying: I happened not to be in my own rooms, but on a

visit to another traveller who lodged in the same hotel, Baron Ulmenstein, a colonel in the King of Hanover's service, who was travelling with his lady. M. Mezzofanti was brought to me; and, as I was the only person who knew him, I introduced him to the company as a professor and librarian of the university. He took part in the conversation, which was carried on in German; and, after this had gone on for a considerable time, the baroness took an opportunity of asking me aside, how it came to pass that a German was a professor and librarian in an Italian university. I replied, that M. Mezzofanti was no German, that he was a very good Italian, of that city of Bologna, and had never been out of it. Judge of the astonishment of all the company, and of the explanations that followed! My readers, I am sure, will not think such a testimony as the Baroness Ulmenstein's open to any suspicion. She is a thorough German, highly cultivated, and speaks four languages in great perfection."*

One result of the doubts thus expressed as to the credibility of Von Zach's report was to draw out a testimony to Mezzofanti's familiarity with a language for which he had not before publicly gotten credit, the Czechish or Bohemian. A correspondent of the Baron at Vienna, having read his statement in the *Correspondance*, expressed his satisfaction at the confirmation which it supplied of what he had before regarded as incredible.

"I was very glad," he writes, "to see confirmed by you what the Chevalier d'Odelga, colonel and commandant of Prince Leopold of Naples' regiment, told me of that marvellous man. Chevalier d'Odelga, who is a Bohemian, conversed in that language with M. Mezzofanti, and assured me that he would have taken him for a countryman had he not known him to be an Italian. I frankly confess that until now, I only half believed the tale, for I regard the Bohemian language as the very rack of an Italian tongue."†

* Correspondance Astronomique, vol. v. p. 160.
† Correspondance Astronomique, v. 163.

Captain (afterwards admiral) Smyth, who accompanied Baron von Zach on this occasion, still survives, after a career of high professional as well as literary and scientific distinction. As a reply to the incredulity to which Von Zach alludes, I may add not only that Admiral Smyth in his "Cycle of Celestial Objects for the Use of Astronomers," adopts the Baron's narrative and reprints it at length,* but that his present recollections of the interview, which he has been so good as to communicate to me, fully confirm all the Baron's statements.† The admiral adds that, although Mezzofanti made no claim to the character of a practical astronomer, he understood well and was much interested in the phenomena of the eclipse, and especially in its predicted annularity at Bologna. "It was at Mezzofanti's instance also," he says, "that Caturegli undertook to compute in advance the elements for an almanac for the use of certain distant convents of the Levant, to aid them in celebrating Easter contemporaneously."‡

* Vol. I. p.p. 481-2, London, 1844.

† In accounting for the appearance of such a narrative in a Journal with a purely scientific title, Admiral Smyth observes, that "it was one of Von Zach's axioms that all true friends of science should try to keep it afloat in society, as fishermen do their nets, by attaching pieces of cork to the seine; and therefore he embodied a good deal of anecdote in his monthly journal of astronomical correspondence, a most delightful and useful periodical."

‡ Mezzofanti and his friend presented to the Admiral the first volume of the "Ephemerides," which contained the coefficients for the principal stars to be observed during five years—there were still at that time three years to run;—and expressed a hope that England would contribute funds towards the cost of the printing. On re-

Startling, therefore, as Von Zach's account appeared at the time of its publication, we can no longer hesitate to receive it literally and in its integrity.

In reference to one part of it, that which regards the manner in which Mezzofanti acquired the gipsy language—viz., "that he learned it from a gipsy soldier in one of the Hungarian regiments quartered at Bologna," it is proper to observe, that he appears also, towards the end of his life, to have studied this dialect from books. The catalogue of his library contains two Gipsy Grammars, one in German, and one in Italian. The peculiar idiom of this strange language in which he himself was initiated, is that which prevails among the gipsies of Bohemia and Hungary, or rather Transylvania, which is the purest of all the European gipsy dialects, and differs considerably from that of the Spanish gipsies. Borrow has given a short comparative vocabulary* of both, and has

turning to England, the admiral gave this copy to the Rev. Dr. William Pearson, then engaged in the publication of his elaborate work on Practical Astronomy. Dr. Pearson, (at p. 495 of the first volume,) describing a table of 520 zodiacal stars, thus acknowledges his obligations to that work. "The same page also contains the N.E. angle that the star's meridian makes with the ecliptic, and the annual variation of that angle; the principal columns of which have been taken from the *Bononiæ Ephemerides* for 1817-1822, computed by Pietro Caturegli, which computations have greatly facilitated our labours."

* Borrow's Gipsies in Spain, p. 240. Ample specimens and descriptions of it are given by Adelung, vol. I. p.p. 244-52. It may, perhaps, be necessary to add that neither of these dialects, nor indeed of any of the dialects used by European gipsies, bears the least resemblance

also printed the Pater Noster in the Spanish gipsy form.

The notoriety which this and other similar narratives procured for the modest professor, speedily rendered him an object of curiosity to every stranger visiting Bologna; and as there was no want of critics not unwilling to question, or at least to scrutinize, the truth of the marvels recounted by their predecessors, it may easily be believed that his life became in some sort a perpetual ordeal. Thus Blume, the author of the *Iter Italicum*, who visited Bologna some time after Von Zach, does not hesitate to take the Baron to task, and to declare his account very much exaggerated.

"Bianconi and Mezzofanti," says Blume, "are the librarians. The latter, as is well known, is considered throughout all Europe as a linguistic prodigy, a second Mithridates; and is said to speak and write with fluency two-and-thirty dead and living languages. Willingly as I join in this admiration, especially as his countrymen usually display little talent for the acquisition of foreign tongues, I cannot but remark that the account recently given in the fourth and fifth volumes of Von Zach's 'Correspondance As-

(although often confounded with it) to the "thieves' slang," which is used by robbers and other *mauvais sujets* in various countries,—the "Rothwälsch" (Red Italian) of Germany, the "Argot" of France, the "Germania" of Spain, and the "Gergo" of Italy. All these, like the English "slang," consist chiefly of words borrowed from the languages of the several countries in which they prevail, applied in a hidden sense known only to the initiated. On the contrary the gipsy idiom is almost a language properly so called. See a singular chapter in Borrow's Gipsies in Spain, 242-57. For a copious vocabulary of the "Argot" of the French thieves, see M. Nisard's most curious and amusing *Litterature du Colportage*, II. 383-403.

tronomique,' is very much exaggerated. Readiness in speaking a language should not be confounded with philological knowledge. I have heard few Italians speak German as well as Mezzofanti; but I have also heard him maintain that between Platt-Deutsch, or the Low German, and the Dutch language, there was no difference whatever."*

It will be remarked here, however, that these condemnatory observations of Herr Blume do not regard Mezzofanti's attainments as a linguist, but only his skill as a philologist. On the contrary, to his linguistic talents Blume bears testimony hardly less unreserved than that which he criticises in the Baron; and as regards the rest of Blume's criticism, the mistake in philology, (as to the identity of Platt-Deutsch with Dutch,) which he alleges, and which appears to be the sole foundation of his depreciatory judgment of Mezzofanti's philological knowledge, is certainly a very minor one, and one which may be very readily excused in any other than a German; especially as Adelung (II. 261), distinctly states of at least one dialect of Platt-Deutsch, that spoken in Hamburg and Altona, that it contains a large admixture of Dutch words—so large that a cursory observer, if we may judge from the specimens which Adelung gives (II. 268), might very readily consider the two dialects almost identical. As to another statement of Blume's, which imputes to Mezzofanti a want of courtesy to strangers visiting or studying in the library, it is contradicted by the unanimous testimony of all who ever saw him whether at Bologna or at Rome. He was politeness and good nature itself.

* Blume's Iter Italicum, II. p. 152.

But it must not be supposed that all the visits which Mezzofanti received were of the character hitherto described, and were attended with no fruit beyond a passing display of his wonderful faculty. Visitors occasionally appeared, whose knowledge he was enabled to turn to profitable account in extending his own store of languages. From an Armenian traveller who came to Bologna in 1818, he received his first initiation in that difficult and peculiar language, which he afterwards extended in a visit to the celebrated convent of San Lazzaro, at Venice. He studied Georgian with the assistance of a young man from Teflis, who graduated in medicine at Bologna. And even from natives of those countries with the general language of which he was most familar, he seldom failed to learn some of the peculiarities of local or provincial dialects by which the several branches of each are distinguished. In this way he learned Flemish from some Belgian students of the university. On the other hand, select pupils from various parts came to attend his Greek or Oriental lectures, or to pursue their linguistic studies privately under his direction. One of these, the Abate Celestino Cavedoni, now librarian of the Este Library at Modena, and one of the most eminent antiquarians of Italy, was his pupil from 1816 till 1821. With this excellent youth Mezzofanti formed a cordial friendship; and after Cavedoni's return to Modena, they maintained a steady and affectionate, although not very frequent, correspondance until Mezzofanti's final removal from Bologna. Another was Dr. Liborio Veggetti, the present occupant

of Mezzofanti's ancient office in the university library, an office which he owes to the warm recommendation of his former master. A third was the still more distinguished scholar, Ippolito Rosellini, the associate and successor of Champollion in his great work on Egyptian antiquities. Rosellini, who was a native of Pisa, had distinguished himself so much during his early studies in that university, that, on the death of Malanima, the professor of oriental languages, in 1819, Rosellini, then only in his nineteenth year, was provisionally selected to succeed him. It was ordered, nevertheless, that he should first prepare himself by a regular course of study; and with this view he was sent, at the charge of his government, to attend in Bologna the lectures of the great master of oriental studies. Mezzofanti entered with all his characteristic kindness and ardour into the young man's project. He sent him with a warm letter of recommendation, May 17, 1823, to his friend De Rossi, at Parma; later in the same year, by the representation which he made of his industry and progress, he obtained for him an increase of the pension which had been assigned for his probationary studies; and in the work 'on the Hebrew Vowel-points,' which Rosellini published in Bologna,* he owed much to the kind criticism and advice of his master. He remained at Bologna till 1824, when his appointment was made absolute, and he returned to Pisa to enter upon its duties. The distinguished after career of Rosellini is well-known.

* In 1823. See an interesting biography in the Memorie di Modena.

I shall only add, that through life he entertained the most grateful recollection of his old master, and that, on his return from the Egyptian expedition, he made a special visit to Rome for the purpose of seeing him.*

The Abate Cavedoni, who, on his return to Modena, as we have seen, continued to correspond for many years with Mezzofanti, has kindly communicated to me those of Mezzofanti's letters which he has preserved. They contain some interesting particulars of a portion of his life regarding which few other notices have been published.

In addition to his public lectures in the university and his occupation as librarian, he still continued to give private instructions in languages. Mr. Francis Hare, elder brother of the late Archdeacon Julius Hare, learned Italian under his direction. The Countess of Granville, then residing in the family of her aunt, the Countess Marescalchi, remembers to have received her first lessons in English from him. A young Franciscan of the principality of Bosnia prepared himself for his mission by studying Turkish under his tuition. Many other foreigners were among his pupils. Indeed, the ordinary routine of his day, as detailed by one of his surviving friends in Bologna and confirmed by his own letters to Cavedoni, may well excite a feeling of wonder at the extraordinary energy, which enabled him, from the midst of occupations so continuous and so varied, to steal time for the purpose of increasing, or even of maintaining, the stores which he had already

* Manavit, p. 51.

acquired. He rose soon after four o'clock, both in winter and in summer; and, after his morning prayer and meditation, celebrated mass—in winter at the earliest light; after which he took a cup of chocolate or coffee. At eight o'clock he gave his daily lecture in the university; thence he passed to the library, where, as is plain from many circumstances, he was generally actively engaged in the duties of his office, although constantly interrupted by the visits of strangers. As his apartments were in the library building, his occupations can hardly be said to have been suspended by his frugal dinner, which, according to the national usage, was at twelve o'clock, and from which he returned to the library. The afternoon was occupied with his private pupils. As his habits of eating and drinking were temperate in the extreme, his supper, (sometimes in his own apartments, sometimes at the house of his sister or of some other friend,) was of the very simplest kind. He continued his studies to a late hour; and, even after retiring to bed, he invariably read for a short time, till the symptoms of approaching sleep satisfied him that, without fear of loss of time, he might abandon all further thought of study.

Such were his ordinary every day occupations; and, amply as they may seem to fill up the circle of twenty-four hours, he contrived, amidst them all, to find time for many offices of voluntary charity. He was assiduous in the confessional, and especially in receiving the confessions of foreigners of every degree. For the spiritual care of all Catholic foreigners, indeed,

he seems to have been regarded as invested with a particular commission. In cases of sickness, especially, he was a constant and most cheerful visitor; and there are not a few still living, of those that visited Bologna during these years, who retain a lively and grateful recollection of the kindly attentions, and the still more consolatory ministrations, for which they were indebted to his ready charity.

Another extra-official occupation which absorbed a considerable portion of his time, was the examination of books submitted to him for revision, particularly of those connected with his favourite studies. It sometimes happened that he received such commissions from Rome. "I cannot reckon," he writes, apologetically, to his friend the abate Cavedoni, "upon a single free moment. The library, my professorship, my private lectures, the revision of books, foreigners, well, sick, or dying, do not leave me time to breathe. I am fast losing, nay I have already lost, the habit of applying myself to study; and when, from time to time, I am called on to do anything, I find myself reduced to the necessity of improvising."

The most interesting record of this portion of his life will be the series of his letters to his friend and pupil Cavedoni, already alluded to. Unfortunately they are not numerous, and they occur at rather distant intervals; but they are at least valuable as being perfectly simple and unstudied, and free, to an extent very unusual in Italian correspondence, from that artificial and ceremonious character which so often destroys in our eyes the charm of the cleveres-

foreign correspondence. Cavedoni, during his studies at Bologna, had lived on terms of the most cordial intimacy with his professor and with his family. Mezzofanti's nephews, especially the young abate Joseph Mezzofanti, (whom we shall find commemorated in some of these letters under the pet name *Giuseppino*, *Joe*,) had been his constant companion and friend.

The first of these letters was written in reply to one of the ordinary new-year's complimentary letters, which the abate Cavedoni, soon after his return to Modena, had addressed to his old professor.

Bologna, January 18, 1822.

My most esteemed Don Celestino,

I did not fail, on the first day of the new year, to pray with all my heart that God may ever bestow abundantly upon you His best and sweetest graces. May He deign to hear a prayer, which I shall never cease to offer! I commend myself in turn to your fervent prayers.

I am delighted to hear that the abate Baraldi is about to employ his various learning and his great zeal so worthily in the cause of our holy religion I shall be most happy to take a copy of the "*Memorie*," which, as I am informed, are about to appear under his editorship. May I beg of you to arrange that the numbers shall reach me as early as possible after publication? They may be sent through the post; but it will be necessary to fold the packet in such a way as to let it be seen that it is a periodical, in order that it may not be charged the full postage. My great object is to receive the numbers at the earliest moment, in order that a work which is intended to counteract the irreligious principles now unhappily so current, may be read as extensively as possible.

I shall examine your medal to-morrow, and, should I succeed in making anything out of it, I will write to you. Let me know how I shall send it back to you.

Recollect that we are looking forward here to a visit from you with the utmost anxiety. It was a great surprise and disappointment to us, not to see you during the late holy festivals. Do not forget me, and believe me,

Ever your most affectionate servant,

D. Joseph Mezzofanti.

The journal referred to in this letter is the now voluminous periodical, "*Memorie di Religione, di Morale, e di Letteratura,*" founded at Modena in 1822, and continued, with one or two short interruptions, up to the present time. The "Abate Baraldi" was a learned ecclesiastic, afterwards arch-priest of Modena.

Cavedoni, since his return to Modena, had been chiefly engaged in archæological studies, and especially in that of numismatics. He often consulted Mezzofanti on these subjects, to which, without being a professed antiquarian, the latter had given some attention. In acknowledgment of this obligation, Cavedoni, several years afterwards, dedicated to him his Spiecilegio Numismatico.*

* I may preserve here an impromptu Greek distich of Mezzofanti's, addressed to Cavedoni on the publication of his "Memoir on the antiquities of the Museum of Modena," which, although commonplace enough in sentiment, at least illustrates his curious facility of versification.

Εἰς Καιλεστίνον Καυεδόνιον.

Μνήματα των παλαι ἄνθρωπων σοφὸς οσσ' ἀναφαίνεις,
Ἐκ χρόνος ἤ πέρθει σόυ δε κλέος θαλέθει.

It was an impromptu in the literal sense of the word, being thrown off without a moment's thought, and in the midst of a group of friends. His friend Ferrucci rendered it into the following Latin distich.

Celestino Cavedonio.

Omnia que prudens aperis monumenta priorum
Ævo intacta manent: hinc tibi fama viget.

The following letter throws some light on the time and the manner in which his attention was first turned to the Georgian language. The youth to whom it refers was in Bologna in the year 1820 or 1821.

Cavedoni had apologised for occupying his time by his letters.

Bologna, April 5, 1823.

My Dear Don Celestino,

It will always be a most grateful and pleasing distraction for me in the midst of my endless occupations, to receive even a line from you. It is true that occasionally I may not be able to enjoy this gratification without the drawback arising from regret at not having it in my power to reply to you immediately; but I trust that you will be able to make allowance for me, and that such delays on my part will never cause you to suspect that I have ceased to remember you with special affection.

Of the two works which you mention, that of Father Giorgi still maintains the reputation which its author commanded during life by his prodigious learning. Will you let me know whether the little work in Georgian that you refer to is printed or manuscript? You are quite right in supposing that I have not thought of that language since the departure of the young physician of Teflis, who took his medical degree in our university. Alas! what a large proportion of my life is spent in teaching! If I but did that well, I might be content; but when one does too much, he does nothing as it ought to be done.

I had not heard a word of Signor Baraldi's affliction, for which I am much concerned. I trust that, when you write again, you will have better news for me. Pray present my special compliments to the Librarian.

Do not forget me; and, in order that I may know you do not, write often to assure me that it is so. Don Giuseppino sends you a thousand greetings, and I myself more that a thousand.

Ever your most devoted servant and friend,

D. Joseph Mezzofanti.

In this year, Mezzofanti made the acquaintance of the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire, during one of her visits to the north of Italy. The success of her magnificent edition of Horace's Fifth Satire—his journey to Brundusium—had suggested to her the idea of a similar edition of the Eneid. The first volume, with a series of illustrations, scenical, as well as historical, (of Troy, Ithaca, Gaeta, Gabii, &c.,) had appeared in Rome in 1819;* and the object of the duchess in this visit, was to procure sketches in the locality of Mantua, and especially a sketch of Pietole, the supposed site of the ancient Andes, the place of the poet's birth, upon that plain,

> —— tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
> Mincius.

One of Mezzofanti's letters, addressed to his friend Pezzana, shews the lengths to which this eccentric lady carried her zeal for the illustration of this really magnificent work. Although the second volume had

* "L'Eneide di Virgilio, recata in versi Italiani, da Annibale Caro," 2vols. folio. It was printed by DeRomanis. The duchess was the Lady Elizabeth Hervey, daughter of the episcopal Earl of Bristol; and after the death of her first husband, Mr. Forster, had married the Duke of Devonshire. She is the true heroine of Gibbon's ludicrous love-scene at Lausanne, described by Lord Brougham, but by him related of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod, afterwards Madame Necker. See an article in the Biographie Universelle, (lxii, p. 452,) by the Chevalier Artand de Montor; also "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, (vol. i., p. 64,) by an Octogenarian," (the late Mr. James Roche, of Cork, the J. R. of the Gentleman's Magazine, and a frequent contributor to the Dublin Review, and other periodicals)—a repertory of curious literary and personal anecdotes, as well of solid and valuable information.

been already published, and many of the copies had been distributed, she continued to add to the number of the illustrations.

"Her Grace, the duchess of Devonshire," he writes, July 6th, 1823, "on leaving Bologna, commissioned mê to forward to you the second volume of the Eneid, translated by Caro. In order to secure its safe and punctual delivery, I begged the good offices of the Abate Crescini, who had just then arrived; and he at once undertook it with his usual courtesy. 'This edition has won the admiration of all our artists; and the duchess, not content with its present illustrations, has gone to Mantua, taking with her another excellent landscape-painter, our fellow-citizen, Signor Fantuzzi, to make a sketch of Pietole, to be added to the other plates, which already adorn this splendid work of art."

In August, 1823, died the venerable Pope Pius VII. The desire, which, on his return from captivity, he expressed to secure Mezzofanti's services in his own capital, had been repeated subsequently on more than one occasion. The new Pope, Leo XII., regarded him with equal favour; but his attachment to home still remained unchanged; and the Pope named him, in 1824, a member of the Collegio dei consultori at Bologna.

Of his correspondence during this year no portion has come into my hands; but there is one of his letters of 1825, (dated April 8th,) which, although it is but an answer to a commonplace letter written to him by Cavedoni, with the catalogue of an expected sale of books, seems worthy to be preserved, at least as an indication of the direction and progress of his studies

"It is always difficult," he writes, "to fix the fair price of a class of books which either are not in the market at all, or which appear but seldom for sale, chiefly because there are but few who seek for such publications. In my case, it becomes almost impossible to determine it, as I have no opportunity of seeing the books, and very little leisure even to examine the catalogue, being obliged to return it in so short a time.

"I only venture, therefore, to select a few, which I should be disposed to take, provided the price of all together shall not exceed forty Roman crowns. Try to make a bargain for me, or at all events, endeavour to prevent the books from being either scattered or buried in some inaccessible corner.

"I should wish then to take the following:—

The 'nine MSS., either extracted from printed books, or of uncertain value.'

The 'Grammatica Japonica,' Romæ No. 22, in the Catalogue.

The 'Grammatica Marasta,' * number 32.

The 'Grammatica Linguæ Amharicæ.'† number 43.

The 'Osservazioni sulla Lingua albanese;' number 44.

The 'Grammatica Damulica,'‡ number 46.

Benjamin Schulz's, 'Grammatica Hindostanica,' number 50.

'Chilidugu; sive ses Chilenses,'§ number 67.

And the 'Catecismo en Lengua Espanola y Moxa,'‖ No. 71.

I shall await your reply."

Only one of these works, the "Observations on the Albanese Language," (by Francis Maria da Lecce,)

* This is probably the Grammar of the Mahratta language, published by the Propaganda, in 1778. The name is sometimes latinized in this form. Adelung, I., 220.

† Most likely Ludolf's, Francfort, 1698.

‡ By Barth. Ziegenbolg, Halle, 1716.

§ Bernard Havestadt, "Descriptio Status tum Naturalis, tum civilis, tum Moralis, Regni Populique Chilensis," Munster, 1777. It contains a Chilian Grammar and Vocabulary, together with a Catechism in prose, and also in verse.

‖ Probably the Catechism in the Moxa (South American) language, mentioned by Hervas. See Adelung, III, 564.

appears in the catalogue of Mezzofanti's Library. Benjamin Schulz's Tamul Bible and New Testament, are both in that catalogue, but not his Hindostani Grammar. Probably the price of the books exceeded the very modest limit which Mezzofanti's humble means compelled him to fix.

In the August of 1825, he had a visit from the veteran philologist and *literateur*, Frederic Jacobs, of Gotha. The report of Jacobs may be considered of special importance, as he had been prepared, by the doubts expressed as to the credibility of Baron Von Zach's report, to scrutinize with some jealousy the real extent of the attainments thus glowingly described. It is important, therefore, to note that after quoting all the most material portions of Von Zach's narrative, he fully confirms it from his own observations—

"I was most kindly received by him," says Dr. Jacobs: "we spoke in German for above an hour, so that I had full opportunity for observing the facility with which he spoke; his conversation was animated, his vocabulary select and appropriate, his pronunciation by no means foreign, and I could detect nothing but here and there a little of the North German accent. He was not unacquainted with German literature, spoke among other things of Voss's services in the theory of metre, and made some observations on the imitation of the metrical system of the ancients. His opinions were precise and expressed without dogmatism. This fault, so common among persons of talent, appears quite foreign to him, and there is not a trace of charlatanism about him."

As a somewhat different opinion has been expressed by others, the reader will observe the testimony borne by Jacobs, not only to Mezzofanti's scholarship and philological attainments in a department but little cultivated, but also to the "selectness and appro-

priateness" of his German vocabulary, the "facility with which he spoke," and the general purity and correctness of his conversational style.

He proceeds to describe another peculiarity of Mezzofanti's extraordinary faculty which is equally deserving of notice, but which no other visitor whom we have hitherto seen, has brought out so strongly.

"Not less remarkable are the ease and readiness with which he passes in conversation from one language to another, from the north to the south, from the east to the west, and the dexterity with which he speaks several of the most difficult together, without the least seeming effort; and whereas, in cognate languages, the slightest difference creates confusion;—so that, for instance the German in Holland or the Dutchman in Germany, often mixes the sister and mother tongues so as to become unintelligible;—Mezzofanti ever draws the line most sharply, and his path in each realm of languages is uniformly firm and secure."

We may also add Professor Jacobs' description of the personal appearance of the great linguist at this period of his life.

"Mezzofanti," he says, "is of the middle size, or rather below it; he is thin and pale, and his whole appearance indicates delicacy. He appears to be between fifty and sixty years old [he was really, in 1825, fifty-one]; his movements are easy and unembarrassed; his whole bearing is that of a man who has mixed much in society. He is active and zealous in the discharge of his duties, and never fails to celebrate mass every day."*

I have thought it necessary to draw the reader's attention to these points, in reference to Mezzofanti's German, in order that he may compare them with the observations of Dr. Tholuck, Chevalier Bunsen, Guido Görres, and other distinguished Germans, who visited him at a later period.

* Fr. Jacobs, Vermischte Schriften, vol. vi. p. 517, and following

All his later letters to the Abate Cavedoni, which are filled with apologies for his tardiness as a correspondent, tell the same story of ceaseless occupation.

"A Franciscian friar of the Bosnian province," he writes, November 23rd, 1825, "who has been learning Turkish with me for the purposes of his mission in Bosnia, being on his way to Modena, has called to inquire whether I have any occasion to write to that city. The remorse which I feel at not having written to you for so long a time, makes it impossible for me to give a denial; and I write this letter, into which I wish I could crowd all the expressions of gratitude which I owe to you for your constant and faithful remembrance of one, who, although he certainly never forgets you, yet rarely gives you, at least in writing, the smallest evidence of his remembrance.

The truth is that I should only be too happy to do so, and that it would seem to me but a renewal of the pleasant literary discussions which we used to hold with one another here. But unfortunately, I am too much occupied to indulge myself with this relaxation. I say this, however, only to excuse myself; for I assure you that I look eagerly for letters from you, and that it is a great comfort to me to receive one.

As regards those words terminating in *ite* which are now commonly used by medical writers, although their formation is not grammatically exact, and although they do not precisely correspond with those which were employed by the ancients, yet as they have now obtained general currency, it would be hyper-critical and useless to seek to reform them. You may satisfy grammarians by a brief annotation to show that you do not overlook what is due to their art—I mean of course Greek grammarians; for I suppose our own grammarians will perhaps prefer the termination which has been sanctioned by use, and which may possibly appear to them less disagreeable. You see that I am but repeating your own opinion, and if I did not write sooner to you on the subject, it was because my own judgment fully agreed with what you had expressed in your letter.

I congratulate you on the success of your brother's studies. I have been much gratified by the learning, the industry, and the zeal for religion, which he has displayed. Offer him my best thanks.

Remember me in your prayers: write to me, and believe me unchangingly yours."

The same regrets are still more strikingly expressed in the following letter.

"I have been wishing, for several days past, to write and thank you heartily for your kindness towards me, but it is only this day that I have been able to steal a moment for the purpose. Be assured that I do not forget how patiently you bore with me, while, in the midst of the thousand distractions to which I was liable, we were reading together the Greek and Oriental languages. If I recal to your recollection the manner of my life at that time, and the ever recurring interruptions of my studies, it is only for the purpose of letting you see that, as the same state of things still continues, or rather has been changed for the worse, I have not time to show my gratitude for your constant remembrance of me. Still I thank you from my heart for it.

I have not been able to read much of your Tasso, but I have observed some readings which appear to me very happy. I told Count Valdrighi, that I intended to write to you about the volume which Monsignor Mai has just published, to request that you, or some others of your friends in Modena, would take copies of it, as I have some to dispose of. I have since learned that you are already supplied. I beg, nevertheless, that you will take some public occasion to recommend it. I would do so willingly myself, but I cannot find a single free moment. The library, my professorship, my private lectures, the examination of books, the visits of strangers, the attendance on sick or dying foreigners, do not leave me time to breathe. In all this I possess one singular advantage—the excellent health with which I am blessed. But on the other hand, I am losing, or indeed I have already lost, my habit of application; and now, if I am called from time to time to do anything, I find myself reduced to the necessity of improvising.

Forgive me, my dear Don Celestino, for entering thus minutely into my own affairs. Set it down to the account of our friendship, in the name of which I beg of you to remember me in your prayers. Continue to write to me as of old; for, in the midst of my heaviest occupations, I receive your letters with the

greatest pleasure, and find a real enjoyment in them, and in the reminiscences which they bring with them of the happiness that I formerly enjoyed in your dear society.

My sister and my nephews present their most cordial greetings.

Bologna, March, 27, 1826."

It is about this time that we may date the commencement of that intimacy between Mezzofanti and Cardinal Cappellari, afterwards Pope Gregory XVI., which eventually led to Mezzofanti's removal from Bologna to Rome. Cappellari, a distinguished monk of the Camaldolese order, was named to the cardinalate early in 1826; and soon afterwards was placed at the head of the congregation of the Propaganda. Being himself an orientalist of considerable eminence, he had long admired the wonderful gifts of Mezzofanti, and a circumstance occurred soon after his nomination as prefect of the Propaganda, which led to a correspondence between them, in reference to an oriental liturgical manuscript on which the opinion of the great linguist was desired. Cardinal Cappellari forwarded the MS. to Mezzofanti, who in a short time returned it, not merely with an explanation, but with a complete Latin translation. The Cardinal was so grateful for this service, that he wrote to thank the translator, accompanying his letter with a draft for a hundred doubloons. Mezzofanti, with a disinterestedness which his notoriously straitened means made still more honourable, at once wrote to return the draft, with a request that it should be applied to the purposes of the missions of the Propaganda.*

* Stolz. *Biografia*, p. 10. For the details, however, I am indebted to an interesting communication from the abate Mazza, Vice-Rector of the Pontifical Seminary at Bologna.

This appeal from Cardinal Cappellari was not a solitary one. Mezzofanti was not unfrequently consulted in the same way, sometimes on critical or bibliographical questions, sometimes as to the character or contents of a book or MS. in some unknown language. One of his letters to the abate Cavedoni is a long account of an early Latin version of two of St. Gregory Nazianzen's minor spiritual poems, the "Tetrasticha" and the "Monosticha." As this letter (although not without interest as being the only specimen of his critical writings which I have been able to obtain) would have little attraction for the general reader, and throws but little light upon the narrative, it is unnecessary to translate it.* There is another letter, however, of nearly the same period, addressed to his friend count Valdrighi of Modena, on the subject of a MS. in the Birman language submitted by the count for his examination, which will be read with more curiosity.

* The author of this version, Ercole Faello, is not mentioned by Tiraboschi, nor can I find any other notice of him. His version has no value, except perhaps as a bibliographical curiosity; and Mezzofanti's criticism of it in his letter to Cavedoni, is the most judicious that could be offered—the simple recital of a few sentences as a specimen of its obscure and involved style. The Tetrasticha, especially, deserves a better rendering. It consists of fifty-nine iambic tetrastichs, many of which, besides the solid instruction which they embody, are full of simple beauty. The Monosticha is chiefly notable as an ancient example of an acrostic poem on a spiritual subject. It consists of twenty-four iambic verses, commencing in succession with the successive letters of the alphabet, thus:—

Ἀρχήν ἀπάντων καὶ τέλος ποιῦ Θεόν·
Βίᾳ τὸ κέρδος ἐχβιῦν καθ' ἡμέραν. κ.τ.λ.

Faello's version appears not to have been known to the Benedictine editors.

To Count Mario Valdrighi.

"I have to reproach myself for not being more prompt in my acknowledgement of your polite letter; or rather I regret the resolution which I formed of delaying my answer in the hope of being able to make it more satisfactory; since thus it has turned out, that while I was only waiting in the hope of being able to reply with greater accuracy, I have incurred the suspicion of discourtesy, by delaying to send you the little information regarding your oriental MS. which I possessed at the time, and which I regret to say is all that even still I am possessed of.

Although your MS. is the first in these characters that I have ever seen, yet I recognized it at once as a MS. written, or, I should more correctly say, *graven*, in Burmese, the native language of the kingdom of Ava, and the language also which is used by all persons of cultivation in the dependent provinces of that kingdom. I was enabled to recognize the form of the characters from having once seen the alphabet, which was printed by the Propaganda, first in 1776, and again in 1787.*

As my knowledge in reference to the language when I received your letter, did not extend any farther, I was unable to give you any other information regarding your MS. except that it is composed of that species of palm leaves which they use in that country, for the purpose of inscribing or engraving their written characters thereon. The tree, which does not differ much in appearance from the other species of palm, is said to live for a hundred years, and then to die as soon as it has produced its fruit; but perhaps it may be said to live on by preserving on its leaves the writings which they wish to transmit to posterity. It is called in Burmese (or Birmese) by the name of *Ole*.

You will ask what is the character of their writings. The people are said to be ignorant in the extreme, and even the class called *Talapuini*, who live together in community in a sort of Pythagorean college, possess but very little learning. Their studies are confined to two books, written in a peculiar charac-

* See *Catalogo della Libreria*, p. 65.

ter, one entitled *Kammua*, the other *Padinot*.* The Barnabite Fathers also, who founded several churches in Ava, and preached the gospel with incredible zeal all over those vast regions, have written in the native language, several useful books calculated to maintain and increase the fruit of their apostolic labours. The most remarkable of them was Mgr. Peristo, who wrote and spoke the language with great perfection, and whose life has been written by the late distinguished Father Michael Angelo Griffini.

I was about to write all this to you as soon as I first received your MS., but I was anxious to be able to tell you something more; and with this view, I waited for a long time in the hope of obtaining from Paris, Carey's Birmese Grammar, published at Serampore in 1814, and some other books besides; as such books must necessarily be in existence, now that the English have added to their Indian possessions a large tract of the Birmese Empire. But unfortunately, these books either are not to be had at Paris, or have not been carefully sought for.

Accordingly, after all these months of delay, I return you your Birmese MS. written on the leaves of the Ole palm. It has most probably found its way to Italy through some missionary, and perhaps was written by a missionary. This, however, will likely be discoverable from the facts which are known as to the place whence it came.

The information which I am able to give is, you see, very little compared with what you might have expected, and bears a still smaller proportion to my desire to oblige you. I should have wished to translate it all for you, had it been in my power, if it were only as a means of expressing my gratitude and my homage to one from whom I receive so many kindnesses, and to whom I am indebted for so many charming books, either composed or illustrated by himself. For all these favours it only remains for

* For an account of these books see Father Vincenzo Sangermano's *Relazione del Regno Barmano*, Rome, 1833. Sangermano was a Barnabite Father, and had been for many years a missionary in Ava and Pegu. He states that he himself translated these sacred books. (p. 359.) His orthography of the names is slightly different from Mezzofanti's.

me to offer you my most unbounded thanks. I trust that, if you should chance to honour me again with any commission, I shall be able to execute it more successfully, or at all events more satisfactorily. I will at least promise not to delay as I have now done, in the hope of obtaining more information; but, relying that your kindness will lead you to accept what little explanation I shall be able to afford from myself, I will at least endeavour to show my anxious wish to oblige by the promptness of my reply."

Neither Carey's Birman Grammar, nor any other modern book on the subject, appears in the catalogue of Mezzofanti's library. It comprises, however, a few Birman books, amongst which are the two alphabets referred to in the above letter, a translation of Bellarmine's "Doctrina Christiana," and an "Explanation of the Catechism for the use of the Birmese." These books (all printed at the Propaganda press) appear to have been procured after his removal to Rome, where by private study and by intercourse with a few Birmese students in the Propaganda, he acquired the language, as we shall see, sufficiently for the purposes of conversation.

CHAPTER VIII.

[1828-1830.]

In the year 1828, the Crown Prince of Prussia, (now King Frederic William,) while passing through Bologna, on his way to Rome, sought an interview with Mezzofanti. In common with all other visitors, he was struck with wonder at the marvellous variety and accuracy of his knowledge of languages. On his arrival at Rome, he spoke admiringly of this interview to Dr. Tholuck, the present distinguished professor of Theology at Halle, (at that time chaplain of the Prussian Embassy in Rome,) who has kindly communicated the particulars to me. "The prince urged me," says Dr. Tholuck, in an exceedingly interesting letter which shall be inserted later, "not to leave Italy without having seen him. 'He is truly a miracle,' exclaimed the prince; 'he spoke German with me, like a German; with my Privy-Councillor Ancillon, he spoke the purest French; with Bunsen, English; with General Gröben, Swedish.' 'And what

is still more wonderful,' subjoined M. Bunsen, then minister resident in Rome, 'all these languages he has learnt by books alone, without any teacher.'" This opinion of M. Bunsen's, Dr. Tholuck afterwards ascertained to be a mistake, or at least an exaggeration.

It was doubtless to the lessons of his early master, Father Thiulen, that he owed the knowledge of Swedish which enabled him to converse with General Gröben. A still more distinct evidence of his familiarity with it occurred on occasion of the visit of the Crown Prince (now King) Oscar of Sweden to Bologna. M. Braunerhjelm, now Hof-Stallmastäre at Stockholm, who was present at the prince's interview with Mezzofanti, assured Mr. Wackerbarth, who was good enough to make the inquiry for me last year, that "the abate spoke the language quite perfectly." According to another account which I have received, the prince, having suddenly changed the conversation into a dialect peculiar to one of the provinces of Sweden, Mezzofanti was obliged to confess his inability to understand him. What was his amazement, in a subsequent interview, to hear Mezzofanti address him in this very dialect!

"From whom, in the name of all that is wonderful, have you learnt it?" exclaimed the prince.

"From your Royal Highness," replied Mezzofanti. "Your conversation yesterday supplied me with a key to all that is peculiar in its forms, and I am merely translating the common words into this form."

The Countess of Blessington, in the third volume

of her "Idler in Italy," has given an account of her intercourse with Mezzofanti during this year. She adds but little to the facts already known as to Mezzofanti's linguistic attainments; but it may not be uninteresting to contrast with the ponderous and matter of fact sketches of the professional scholars whom we have hitherto been considering, the lighter, but in many respects more striking portraiture of a lady visitor, less capable of estimating the solidity of his learning, but more alive to the minor peculiarities of his manner, to the more delicate shades of his character and disposition, and to the thousand minuter specialities, which, after all, go to form our idea of the man.

Lady Blessington had been present at the solemn mass in the church of St. Petronius at Bologna on the morning of the Festival of the Assumption. An adventure which befel her at the close of the ceremony led to her first meeting with the great linguist, which she thus pleasantly describes.

"While viewing the procession beneath the arcades, I was inadvertently separated from my party, and found myself hurried along by the crowd, hemmed in at all sides by a moving mass of strangers who seemed to eye me with much curiosity. To disentangle myself from the multitude would have been a difficult, if not an impossible task; and I confess I experienced a certain degree of trepidation, inseparable from a woman's feelings, at finding myself alone in the midst of a vast throng not one face of which I had ever previously seen. Great then was my satisfaction at hearing the simple remark of 'We have had a very fine day for the fête,' uttered in English, and with as good a pronunciation as possible, by a person having the air and dress of a clergyman, to another who answered: 'Yes, nothing could be more propitious than the weather.'

Though it is always embarrassing to address a stranger, the sound of my own language, and the position in which I was placed, gave me courage to touch the arm of the first speaker, and to state, that being separated from my party, I must request the protection of my countryman. He turned round, saluted me graciously, said that, though not a countryman, he would gladly assist me to rejoin my party, and immediately placed me between him and his companion.

'You speak English perfectly, yet are not an Englishman!' said I. 'Then you can be no other than professor Mezzofanti?'

Both he and his companion smiled, and he answered; 'My name *is* Mezzofanti.'

I had a letter of introduction from a mutual friend, and, intending to leave it for him in the course of the day, I had put it into my reticule, whence I immediately drew it and gave it to him. He knew the hand-writing at a single glance, and, with great good breeding, put it unopened into his pocket, saying something too flattering for me to repeat, in which the remark, that a good countenance was the best recommendation, was neatly turned. He presented his companion to me, who happened to be the Abbé Scandalaria, then staying on a visit to him, and who speaks English remarkably well.

My party were not a little surprised to see me rejoin them, accompanied by and in conversation with two strangers. When I presented them to my new acquaintances, they were much amused at the recital of my unceremonious encounter and self-introduction to Mezzofanti, who not only devoted a considerable portion of the day to us, but promised to spend the evening at our hotel, and invited us to breakfast with him to-morrow.

The countenance of the wonderful linguist is full of intelligence, his manner well-bred, unaffected and highly agreeable. His facility and felicity in speaking French, German, and English, is most extraordinary, and I am told it is not less so in various other languages. He is a younger man than I expected to find him, and, with the vast erudition he has acquired, is totally exempt from pretension or pedantry."*

* Idler in Italy, III. p. 321.

An adventure with Mezzofanti, quite similar to Lady Blessington's, befel a party of Irish ecclesiastical students on their way to Rome in the very same year. They arrived at Bologna late in the afternoon, and, as they purposed proceeding on their journey early on the following morning, they were unwilling to lose the opportunity of seeing and conversing with the celebrated professor. Accordingly they repaired to the university library; but, as might be expected at so late an hour, they found the library closed and the galleries silent and deserted. After wandering about for a considerable time, in search of some one to whom to address an inquiry, they at last saw an abate of very humble and unpretending appearance approach. The spokesman of the party begged of him, in the best Latin he could summon up at the moment, to point out the way to the library.

"Do you wish to see the library?" asked the abate without a moment's pause, in English, and with an excellent accent.

The student was thunderstruck. "By Jove, boys," he exclaimed turning to his companions, "this is Mezzofanti himself!"

It *was* Mezzofanti; and, on learning that they were Irish, he addressed them a few words in their native language, to which they were obliged to confess their inability to reply. One of the number, however, having learned the language from books, Mezzofanti entered into a conversation with him on its supposed analogies with Welsh.

Of this party, five in number, four are now no

more. The sole survivor, Reverend Philip Meyler of Wexford, still retains a lively recollection not only of the fluency and precision of Mezzofanti's English, but of the friendly warmth with which he received them, of the interest which he manifested in the object of their journey, and of the cordiality of the "*Iter bonum faustumque!*" with which he took his leave.

The clergyman alluded to by Lady Blessington, as the "Abbé Scandalaria," was, in reality, Padre Scandellari,* a learned priest of the congregation of the Scuole Pie, and one of Mezzofanti's especial friends. I was assured by the late Lady Bellew, who knew Padre Scandellari at this period, that he spoke English quite as well as Mezzofanti. Her ladyship, (at that time Mademoiselle de Mendoza y Rios) was presented to Mezzofanti by this father, a few weeks after the visit of Lady Blessington. She was accompanied by the late Bishop Gradwell, ex-rector of the English College at Rome, and by her governess, Madame de Chaussegros,† a native of Marseilles. Mezzofanti conversed fluently with Dr. Gradwell in English, and with Mdlle. de Mendoza, who was a linguist of no common attainments, in English, French, and Spanish; and when he learned that her companion was a Marseillaise, he at once addressed her in the Provençal dialect, which, as the delighted Marseillaise declared, he spoke almost with the grace and propriety of a native of Provence.

* Padre Scandellari died in December, 1831. He is spoken of in terms of high praise in the Gazzetta di Bologna for Dec. 27.

† Madame de Chaussegros was the widow of the officer by whom Toulon was surrendered to the English, in 1793.

It will be remembered that the Crown Prince of Prussia, on his arrival at Rome, counselled Dr. Tholuck not to return to Germany, without visiting the Bolognese prodigy. Having heard of this interview, which took place while Dr. Tholuck was returning to Germany, in 1829, I was naturally anxious to learn what was the impression made upon this distinguished orientalist, by a visit which may be said to have been undertaken with the professed design of testing by a critical examination the reality of the accomplishment of which fame had spoken so unreservedly. Dr. Tholuck, with a courtesy which I gratefully acknowledge, at once forwarded to me a most interesting account of his interview, a portion of which has been already inserted. Dr. Tholuck is known as one of the most eminent linguists of modern Germany. From the clear and idiomatic English of his letter, the reader may infer what are his capabilities, as a critical judge of the same faculty in another. After mentioning M. Bunsen's statement, that Mezzofanti had learned his languages entirely from books, Dr. Tholuck continues :—

"This seemed the more incredible to me, having just made the experience as to Italian, how impossible it is to acquire the niceties of conversational language only from books. On my return from Rome, having arrived at Bologna, I considered it my first duty to call on that eminent linguist, accompanied by a young Dane who was conversant also with the Frisian language, spoken only by a small remnant of that old nation in Sleswic or Friesland. Mezzofanti having commenced the conversation in German, I continued it a quarter of an hour in my native language. He

spoke it fluently, but not without some slighter mistakes, of which, in that space of time, I noticed as many as four, which I took notes of immediately after; nor was the accent a pure German accent, but that of Poles and Bohemians when they speak German, which is to be accounted for from his having acquired that language from individuals of that nation, from Austrian soldiers. Upon this I suddenly turned my conversation into Arabic, having obtained an easy practice in this language by long intercourse with a family in which it was spoken. Mezzofanti made his reply in Arabic without any hesitation, quite correctly, but very slowly, composing one word with the other, from want of practice. I then turned upon Dutch, which he did not know then, but replied in Flemish, a kindred dialect. English and Spanish he spoke with the greatest fluency, but when addressed in Danish he replied in Swedish. The Frisian he had not yet heard of. When requested to write a line for me, he retired in his study, and, as we had been talking together on the Persian, which at that time had been my chief study, and which he was able to converse in, though very slowly, and composing only words, as was my own case likewise, he wrote for me a fine Persian distich of his own composition, though only after long meditation in his study. In the mean while he permitted me to examine his library. Turning up a Cornish (of the dialect of Cornwall) Grammar, I found in it some sheets containing a little vocabulary and grammatical paradigms, and he told me that his way of learning new languages was no other but that of our school-boys, by writing out paradigms and words, and committing to memory. As to the statement of M. Bunsen, mentioned before, it was not confirmed by Mezzofanti's communication: he confessed to have acquired the conversational language chiefly from foreigners in the hospitals, in part from missionaries. The number he then professed to know *well* was upwards of twenty; those which he knew imperfectly, almost the same number. Of the poetical productions of several nations he spoke as a man of taste, but what we call the philosophy of language he did not seem yet to have entered upon."

Dr. Tholuck, it will be seen, did not suffer himself

to be carried away by the enthusiasm of those who had gone before him. He had eyes for faults as well as for excellencies. Nevertheless, the reader will probably agree with me in thinking the undisguised admiration which pervades his calm and circumstantial statement, even with the drawbacks which it contains, a more solid tribute to the fame of Mezzofanti than the declamatory eulogies of a crowd of uninquiring enthusiasts. There is an irresistible guarantee for his trustworthiness as a reporter upon Mezzofanti's German, in the fact that he did not fail to take "a note of the four minor mistakes," into which Mezzofanti fell in the course of their conversation ;* and one cannot hesitate to receive without suspicion what he tells of his " speaking Arabic and Persian without any hesitation, and quite correctly," when we find him carefully distinguish between these and the other languages on which he tried him, and note that in these he proceeded "very slowly, composing one word with another for want of practice." It is proper, however, to add that the opportunity of practice which he afterwards enjoyed at Rome, entirely removed this difficulty: and the fluency and ease with which Mezzofanti there spoke these most difficult languages, is the best confirmation of Dr. Tholuck's sagacity in ascribing

* In the hope of arriving at a still more accurate estimate of Mezzofanti's performance in German conversation, I wrote to request of Dr. Tholuck a note of the " four minor mistakes" to which he alluded. Unfortunately the memorandum which he had made at the time, although he recollects to have observed it quite recently in his papers, has been mislaid, as has also been the Persian distich which Mezzofanti composed during the interview.

the hesitation which was observable at the time of his visit to want of practice alone.

Dr. Tholuck's letter is specially important, also, as establishing the fact that Mezzofanti's acquisitions were by no means so easy, or so much the result of a species of instinctive intuition as has been commonly supposed. Many of the circumstances which Dr. Tholuck notes, indicate labour; all point plainly to successive stages of advancement, to various degrees of perfection, in a word, to all the ordinary accompaniments of progress. The little vocabulary and grammatical paradigms of the Cornish language, an extinct and almost forgotten dialect,* which even our English philologists have come to disregard, tell of themselves the character of the man. Of course the main attraction of the Cornish dialect for him, was as one of the representatives of the old British family; but it cannot be doubted that he took a pleasure in the systematic pursuit of the structure of a language for the mere sake of the mental exercise which it involved. I am assured by the Cavalier Minarelli that the deceased Cardinal's books and papers† contain many such grammatical and phraseological skeletons, even in languages which

* At the time of the Restoration, Cornish was still a living language, especially in the West; but, a century later it had quite disappeared, its sole living representative being an old fish-women, Dolly Pentrath, who was still able to curse and scold in her expressive vernacular. See Adelung, II. 152.

† It was in great part from these papers that Cav. Minarelli compiled the list of the several languages cultivated at various times by Cardinal Mezzofanti, to which I shall have occasion to refer soon after.

might be supposed to have less interest than that in the study of which Dr. Tholuck found him engaged.*

In reply to further inquiries which I addressed to him, Dr. Tholuck added :

"Among the twenty languages which he then professed to know accurately, he pointed out specially the English and the Albanese; among these he professed to know imperfectly, was also the Quichua, or old Peruvian, which he learned from some of the American missionaries. He mentioned that he was then engaged in learning the Bimbarra language, studying it from a catechism translated by a French missionary; an instance which shows that his *knowing* a language was in *some* instances nothing more than having got a smattering of it, as the Americans say.†

* There is another circumstance of Dr. Tholuck's narrative which it is not easy to reconcile with the account already cited (p. 239,) from M. Molbech's Travels;—namely, that "when addressed in Danish he replied in Swedish," since the former was the only language in which, during an interview of about two hours, Mezzofanti conversed with M. Molbech. In order to remove all uncertainty as to this point, I have had inquiry of M. Molbech in person, through the kind offices of the Rev. Dr. Grüner, a learned German Missionary resident at Copenhagen, who himself knew Cardinal Mezzofanti, and whose testimony to the purity and fluency of his Eminence's German conversation I may add to the many already known. M. Molbech reiterates and confirms all the statements made by him in his 'Travels.' He has even taken the trouble to forward a note in his own handwriting, referring to the page in the Transactions of the Philological Society, which contains M. Watts's translation from his book. He adds, that when in 1847, his son waited upon the Cardinal in Rome, for the purpose of presenting him some of M. Molbech's works, he found his Eminence's recollection of the interview perfectly fresh and accurate as to all its details.

† The reader will scarcely agree with this observation of Dr. Tholuck. The Quichua was one of the languages which, as the Dr. testifies, Mezzofanti only professed to know *imperfectly*. It must be remembered too, that, during his early years he had many and pro-

As to the Persian distich, which it took him about half an hour to compose, it was an imitation of the distichs in Sadi's *Gulistan*,* and contained, as is the case with these distichs, some elegant *ἐνθύμησεις*."

Whether, at any subsequent time, he acquired the Frisian dialect, of which "he had not yet heard" when Dr. Tholuck visited him, I am unable to pronounce from any positive information. But I find in his catalogue † several volumes in this language (to which it is highly probable that this interview called his attention;) not merely elementary books, such as Rasck's *Friesche Spraakleer*, but historical works, as for instance, Wissers' History, and even such light literature as Japiek's Collection of Frisian Poetry. ‡ From his known habits I can hardly doubt that, once having acquired these books, he must at least have made some progress towards mastering their contents.

The abate Ubaldo Fabiani, a young Modenese priest of much promise, who, after completing his studies, had been appointed lecturer in sacred Scripture and Hebrew in his native university, came to Bologna in 1829, with letters from the abate Cavedoni to Mezzofanti, under whom he proposed to perfect himself in Hebrew and other Oriental lan-

longed opportunities of intercourse with Father Escobar and other South American Jesuit missionaries, who had settled at Bologna, and from whom he may have acquired the language, much more solidly than he could be supposed to learn it from a few casual interviews such as Dr. Tholuck most probably contemplated.

* The Gulistan is found in the Cardinal's catalogue, p. 109.

† p. 26, Oddly enough they are classed among the *Bohemian* books.

‡ *Friesche Rymlerije*. It is mentioned by Adelung, II. p. 237.

guages. Mezzofanti received him with the utmost cordiality; and the great ability and industry which he exhibited, as well as his exceeding amiableness and unaffected piety, completely won the heart of his master. On his return to Modena, after a residence of a few months, Mezzofanti wrote to his friend Cavedoni.

Bologna, 17 *October*, 1829.

"Don Ubaldo Fabiani is just about to return to Modena, after a sojourn of three months here, the entire of which he has passed in the midst of books. It would be impossible for me to describe to you the assiduity, avidity, and perseverance, with which I have seen him apply to his studies; but I can safely say that the fruit which he has derived from them has even exceeded the labour, as he unites with unwearied diligence a ready wit and a peculiar aptitude for this branch of learning. The principal object of his attention has been the sacred Hebrew text; but he has also applied himself to Chaldee, and in the end to the Rabinical Hebrew—in all cases with most rapid progress. Had his time not been so limited, he had intended to devote himself also to Arabic—a language which has of late become so necessary an appliance of the polemics of sacred Scripture. But I have every confidence that he will do this also, when he shall return another year to Bologna; and I shall be more than willing to accompany him in this study also.

I am much indebted to you for having given me an opportunity of forming the acquaintance of so worthy an ecclesiastic. I have to thank you also for your learned publications, which you were kind enough to send me, and which, in the midst of all my varied occupations, are a source of real pleasure to me. Forgive my irregularity and tardiness as a correspondent; or rather do you return good for evil, by writing to me the more frequently. You will thus do what is most grateful to your devoted friend."

Fabiani had hardly reached Modena when he was seized with fever—the terrible *perniciosa* of the Italian summer and autumn—and was carried off after

an illness of a few days, at the early age of twenty-four. As soon as the melancholy news reached Bologna, Mezzofanti wrote once more to his friend Cavedoni.

Bologna, November 12, 1829.

"Death has snatched Don Ubaldo from us! Alas, how much have we lost in him!—how miserably have we seen all the hopes which we placed in him, cut off in a single moment! What might we not have expected from a young ecclesiastic, so entirely devoted to piety and to letters!

As for himself, his only aspirations were for heaven. His studies had no other end or aim, save God: and God has been pleased to take him to Himself, crowning with an early reward a virtue which, even in the first flower of years, had attained to its full maturity. Ah, let us hope that our dear Don Ubaldo, now close to the Divine Fountain, is there admitted to the hidden source of the divine oracles, to the study of which he addressed himself here with such indefatigable application. Now he will recall to memory, the affectionate care bestowed upon him here by his parents, by his dear Don Celestino, and even by his last master—last in merit as well as in time—and will feel the force of the words which I often repeated to him, never with more tenderness than at our last parting—'Ah, Don Ubaldo, give thyself entirely to the Lord!' He feels now, I confidently trust, what a thing it is to 'belong entirely to the Lord.'

Ah, my dear Don Celestino, I should not be acting worthily, if, on such an event, I gave room for a single moment to earthly thoughts. Our friend has flown to heaven:—let our hearts also turn thither, where we hope to meet him in everlasting joy. Assist me by your prayers to attain this end. When you see our deceased friend's parents, comfort them with the true and blessed consolations which our holy religion bestows; and let us when, in the Adorable Sacrifice, we offer prayers for those who are in tribulation, never fail to pray for each other, and continally strive to disentangle ourselves more and more from the vanity of the world."

The premature death of this excellent young clergyman was felt at Modena as a real calamity. His friend, the abate Cavedoni, published these simple but touching letters of Mezzofanti in the *Memorie** of Modena, as the best testimony which could be offered to the rare merit of the deceased; but, although already known in Italy, they are well worthy of being preserved, not merely as a tribute to the memory of the youth whose death they record, but as representing most truthfully the piety, the sensibility, the fervour, and above all, the amiable and affectionate disposition, of the writer himself.

Soon after the date of these letters was founded at Bologna a literary Academy, which has some interest in connexion with the history of Mezzofanti. Like many of the older learned societies of Italy,† it took to itself a somewhat fanciful designation, although one which falls far short in oddity of those of many among its predecessors;—as the *Oziosi*, or the *Inquieti*, of Bologna, the *Insensati* of Perugia, the *Assorditi* of Urbino, or (strangest of all), the *Umidi*‡ of Florence, who carried the fancy so far as to designate themselves by the names of fish and waterfowls. Mezzofanti and his fellow Academicians contented themselves with the less startling, though somewhat

Vol. xvi., p. 229-30.

† See a very curious chapter in Tiraboschi, vol. vii., p. 139-201; which Disraeli has, as usual, turned freely to his own account in the Curiosities of Literature, p. 348-54.

‡ This is the origin of the nom-de-guerre, La Lasca—(*the Roach,*) by which the too notorious novelist, Grazzini, chose to designate himself as member of this society.

affected, title of *Filopieri*, "Lovers of the Muses." Their Society received the formal approval of the Congregation of Studies, in the beginning of 1830, and commenced to hold its meetings in the same year. But, in connexion with the life of Mezzofanti, it is chiefly memorable for a curious volume of verses, addressed to him by the members, on the occasion of his elevation to the Cardinalate.*

* All' Emo Signor Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti, Applausi dei Filopieri, 8vo. Bologna, 1838.

CHAPTER IX.

[1831.]

HITHERTO the Abate Mezzofanti has appeared chiefly, if not exclusively, as a linguist; and the estimate of his attainments which has long been current, assumes him to have cultivated that single accomplishment to the exclusion of all other branches of study. The report, however, of a visitor, who saw him about the time at which we have now arrived, will be found to present him in a new character.

In introducing this notice of him, a brief preliminary explanation will be necessary—perhaps, indeed, this explanation is indispensable even in itself; for, although the political history of the period does not properly fall within the scope of this biography, yet, as the most important event in the life of Mezzofanti—the transfer of his residence to Rome—arose directly out of his mission to that capital at the termination of the Revolution of 1831, it is necessary to revert, at least in outline, to the most notable occurrences of the preceding years.

The discontent and turbulence which marked the closing years of the reign of Pius VII. had in great measure subsided under the impartial but vigorous administration of Leo XII; nor was the short pontificate of his successor, Pius VIII. who succeeded on the 31st of March, 1829, interrupted by any overt expression of popular discontent. It was well known, nevertheless, throughout this whole period, that an active secret organization was in existence, not alone in the Papal States, but in Naples, in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, in the minor principalities of Parma, Piacenza, and Modena, and indeed throughout the entire of Italy. Everywhere throughout Italy, too, in addition to these secret associations, still subsisted a remnant of the old French or Franco-Italian party, who, while they submitted to the existing state of things, and offered no resistance to the established regime, concealing their discontent, and cautiously repressing their aspirations after the cherished vision of a "united and independent Italy," yet were notoriously dissatisfied with the domestic governments, and lost no opportunity of embarrassing their administration. Of this, in the Papal States, Bologna had long been the centre.

The Abate Mezzofanti had never taken any part in political affairs; but his principles were well known, and his antecedents had long marked him out as an ardent and devoted adherent of the Papal rule. Personally inoffensive and amiable as he was, therefore, he was, on these grounds, distasteful to certain members of the anti-papal party. But by the great

body of his fellow-citizens he was regarded as a man of thoroughly honourable principles; and we shall see that in a crisis of great delicacy and importance he was selected as one of their delegates to the court of Gregory XVI.

It is to these political animosities that allusion is made in the following extremely interesting account of Mezzofanti. It is from the pen of the distinguished historian of the mathematical sciences in Italy, M. Libri; whose name is in itself sufficient to stamp with authority any statement bearing upon a subject in which he has proved himself a master.

For this most interesting communication I am indebted to the good offices of Mr. Watts, to whom it was addressed by M. Libri, in reply to an inquiry kindly made on my behalf by that gentleman. M. Libri's letter is in English, and the purity of its language and elegance of its style are in themselves no slight evidence of his competence to pronounce upon Mezzofanti's accomplishments as a linguist, no less than as a mathematician.

M. Libri's meeting with Mezzofanti occurred at Bologna early in 1830, in the course of a literary tour in which M. Libri was then engaged.

"Among all these eminent men, the one that interested me most was unquestionably the Abbé, (afterwards Cardinal) Mezzofanti, who was then librarian at Bologna, and respecting whose astonishing power in languages I had heard the most extraordinary anecdotes. During a short excursion which I had previously made to Bologna, I had already got a glimpse of that celebrated man; but it was not until 1830 that I could be said to have

seen him. I was presented to him by one of my friends, Count Bianchetti, and I was received by him with great kindness. He made me promise to go and see him again, and offered to show me the library. I accepted his offer eagerly; but it was principally in the hope of having a long conversation with him that I repaired to the library next day.

Before going farther, I ought to say that I approached him with mixed feelings. Personally, I have always been disposed to respect and admire every man who possesses an incontestible superiority in any branch of human knowledge; and in this point of view, M. Mezzofanti, whom every body acknowledges to be the man who knew and could speak more languages than any other living man, had certainly a right to boundless admiration on my part. It was popularly reported at Bologna, that M. Mezzofanti, then fifty years old, knew as many languages as he counted years; and I had heard related in respect to him, by men in whose veracity I have full confidence, so many extraordinary histories, that he became in my eyes a sort of hero of legend or romance; but a hero of flesh and blood, who realized or even surpassed all the wonders attributed to Mithridates as a linguist. On the other hand, the liberal party, who certainly had no sympathies with the Abbé Mezzofanti, spread reports against him, by no means flattering; among which the one that had most frequently reached my ears, consisted in its being ceaselessly repeated, that the celebrated librarian at Bologna was a sort of parrot, endowed with the faculty of articulating sounds which he had heard, that he was only a miracle of memory, understanding having nothing to do with it; and that, independently of this trick of getting words by heart, this extraordinary man possessed no solid information, and little philological erudition. Without blindly adopting this bare assertion, I must acknowledge that the judgment passed on Mezzofanti by persons of some consideration, had made an impression upon my mind, far from being favourable to him: but that impression was soon dissipated in the course of the interview I had with him. Before leaving Florence, I had just read and

carefully studied the treatise on Indefinite Algebra, composed several ages before by Brahmegupta, and which, translated and enriched with an admirable introduction by Colebroke, had been published in London, in 1817.* Being still filled with admiration for the labours of the ancient Hindoos on indeterminate analysis, I mentioned the book casually to Mezzofanti, and merely to show him that even a man almost exclusively devoted to the study of mathematics, might take a lively interest in the labours of the Orientalists. I had no intention of introducing a scientific conversation on this subject with the celebrated librarian; and I must even add, that I thought him quite incapable of engaging in one. How great then was my surprise, when I saw him immediately seize the opportunity, and speak to me during half an hour on the astronomy and mathematics of the Indian races, in a way which would have done honour to a man whose chief occupation had been tracing the history of the sciences. Deeply astonished at so specific a knowledge, which had taken me quite unexpectedly, I eagerly sought explanation from him on points which had seemed to me the most difficult in the history of India; such, for instance, as the probable epoch when certain Indian astronomers had lived, before the Mahometan conquest, and how far those astronomers might have been able, directly or indirectly, to borrow from the Greeks. On all those points Mezzofanti answered on the spot, with great modesty, and as a man who knows how to doubt; but proving to me at the same time, that those were questions on which his mind had already paused, and which he had approached with all the necessary

* Algebra, with Arithmetic and Mensuration; from the Sanscrit of Brahmegupta and Bhascara. Translated by H. T. Colebroke, London, 1817. The *Bija Gannita* had already been published by Mr. Strachey in 1813. In referring to these Hindoo treatises on Mathematics, I may add, that an interesting account of the Hindoo Logic, contributed by Professor Max Müller, is appended to Mr. Thompson's "Outline of the Laws of Thought," (pp. 369-89,) London, 1853. The analogies of all these treatises with the works of the Western writers on the same sciences, are exceedingly curious and interesting.

accomplishment of the accessory sciences. I cannot express how much that conversation interested me; and I did not delay to testify to Mezzofanti all the admiration which knowledge at once so varied and so profound, had excited in me. No more was said of visiting the library, or of seeing books. I had before me a most extraordinary living book, and one well calculated to confound the imagination. Encouraged by his courtesy and modesty, I could not resist my desire of putting questions to him on the mode which he had employed in making himself master of so many languages, He positively assured me, but without entering into any detail, that it was a thing less difficult than was generally thought; that there is in all languages a limited number of points to which it is necessary to pay particular attention; and that, when one is once master of those points, the remainder follows with great facility. He added, that, when one has learned ten or a dozen languages essentially different from one another, one may, with a little study and attention, learn any number of them. I strenuously urged him to publish his experience on the subject and on the result of his labours; but I observed in him a great aversion to the publication of his researches. He affirmed that the more we study, the more do we understand how difficult it is to avoid falling into errors; and, in speaking to me of several writings which he had composed, he told me that they were only essays which by no means deserved to see the light. In the midst of the conversation, as I was still urging him, he rose and went to look in a box for a manuscript with coloured designs, which he showed me, and which had for its object the explanation of the Mexican hieroglyphics. Having begged him to publish at least that work, he told me that it was only an essay, still imperfect, and that his intention was to recast it completely.

This excursion to America suggested to me the idea of putting a new question to him. I had collected at Florence, particularly with relation to bibliography, several translations of the whole Bible, or certain portions of the sacred books, in different foreign languages. Some of these translations were into languages spoken by North American savages; and in looking through

them I had been struck with the measureless length* of most of the words of these tongues. Since the opportunity presented itself naturally, I asked M. Mezzofanti what he thought of those words, and whether the men who spoke languages apparently so calculated to put one out of breath, did not seem to be endowed with peculiar organs. Immediately taking down a book written in one of those languages, the celebrated linguist showed me practically how, in his opinion, the savages managed to pronounce these interminable words, without too much trouble. For fear of making mistakes, I cannot venture, after twenty-five years, to reproduce this explanation from memory. According to my usual practice, I had written out, on my return home, the conversation which I had just had with the celebrated linguist, and if I still possessed that part of my journal, you would find there almost the exact words of the Abbé Mezzofanti; but those papers having been taken away from me by people who, under a pretext as ridiculous as odious, despoiled me, after the revolution of 1848, of all that I possessed at Paris, I must confine myself to mentioning the fact of the explanation which was given to me, without being able to tell you in what that explanation consisted.

After what I have just recounted to you, I could add nothing to express to you the opinion which that long conversation with M. Mezzofanti (which during the few days that I passed at Bologna was followed by some other interviews much shorter, and as it were fugitive,) left in my mind on the subject of the erudition, as profound as it was various, of that universal linguist. As, however, I express here an opinion which certainly was not that of every-

* Some curious and interesting remarks on the peculiarity of the Indian languages here mentioned by M. Libri, will be found in Du Ponceau's "Memoire sur le Systeme Grammaticale des Langues Indiennes," pp. 143, and foll. Some words in the Chippewa language contain *thirteen* or *fourteen* syllables; but they should be called phrases rather than words. M. Du Ponceau gives an example from the language of the Indians of Massachusetts—the word *wutappesittukquissunnuhwehtunkquoh*, "*genuflecting!*" p. 143. The same characteristic is found in the Mexican and Central American languages. In Mexican "a parish-priest" is "*notlazomanitzteopitzkatatzins!*"

body, permit me to corroborate that opinion by the testimony of Giordani, a man not only celebrated in Italy for the admirable purity of his style, but who also enjoyed deserved reputation as a profound Grecian, and a consummate Latin scholar. The testimony of Giordani on the subject of the Abbé Mezzofanti is the more remarkable, because, besides Giordani's having (as is generally known) a marked antipathy for the ultra-catholic party to which Mezzofanti was thought to belong, he and the Abbé had had some little personal quarrels the remembrance of which was not effaced. Notwithstanding this, I read in the letters of Giordani lately published at Milan, that, in his opinion, Mezzofanti was quite a superior man."

M Libri* proceeds to cite several passages from Giordani's letters, which, as I have already quoted them in their proper place, it is needless to repeat here. Indeed no additional testimony could add weight to his own authority on any of the subjects to which he refers in this most interesting letter.

Soon after this interview, the quiet of Mezzofanti's life was interrupted for a time. The Revolution of Paris in July, 1830, and the events in Belgium and Poland by which it was rapidly followed, were not slow to provoke a response in Italy. The long repressed hopes of the republican party were thus suddenly realised, and the organization of the secret societies became at once more active and more extended. For a time the prudent and moderate policy

* While M. Libri was writing this letter, he learned that Count Pepoli was in possession of a short autobiographical sketch of Mezzofanti. The count subsequently was good enough to permit me to inspect this fragment; but I was mortified to find that it was not by the Cardinal himself, but by some member of his family. It is very short, and contains no fact which I had not previously known.

adopted by Pius VIII. in reference to the events in France, had the effect of defeating the measures of the Italian revolutionists ; but his death on the thirtieth of November in that year, appeared to afford a favourable opportunity for their attempt. During the conclave for the election of his successor, all the preparations were made. The stroke was sudden and rapid. The very day after the election of Gregory XVI., but before the news had been transmitted from Rome, an outbreak took place at Modena. It was followed, on the next day, by a similar proceeding at Bologna,—by the calling out of a national guard, and the proclamation of a provisional government. The Papal delegate was expelled from Bologna. The Duke of Modena fled to Mantua. Maria Louisa, Duchess of Parma, took refuge in France. And on the 26th of the same month, deputies from all the revolted states, by a joint instrument, proclaimed the United Republic of Italy!

This success, however, was as short-lived as it had been rapid. The duke of Modena was reinstated by the arms of Austria on the 9th of March. Order was restored about the same date at Parma: and, before the end of the month of March, all traces of the revolutionary movement had for the time disappeared throughout the States of the Church.*

It has been customary for the cities and *communi* of the Papal States on the accession of each new Pon-

* See the series of the *Gazzetta di Bologna*; see also Spalding's "Italy and the Italian Islands," for a compendious but accurate summary of the facts.

tiff, to send a deputation of their most notable citizens to offer their homage and present their congratulations at the foot of the throne. Many of the chief cities had already complied with the established usage.* Bologna, restored to a calmer mind, now hastened to follow the example. Three delegates were deputed for the purpose—the Marchese Zambeccari, Count Lewis Isolani, and the abate Mezzofanti. They arrived in Rome in the beginning of May,† and on the 9th of the same month, were admitted to an audience of the Pope, who received them with great kindness, and inquired anxiously into the condition of Bologna, and the grievances which had given occasion to the recent discontents.

To Mezzofanti in particular the Pope showed marked attention. It had been one of his requests to Cardinal Opizzoni, the archbishop, when returning to Bologna on the suppression of the Revolution, that he should send Professor Mezzofanti to visit him. He still remembered the disinterestedness which the professor had shewn in their first correspondence; and the time had now come when it was in his power to make some acknowledgment. A few days after Mezzofanti's arrival he was named domestic prelate and proto-notary apostolic, and at his final audience before returning to Bologna, the pope renewed in person the invitation to settle permanently in Rome, which had formerly been made to him by Cardinal

* See the official announcements in the *Diario di Roma* in March and April.

† *Diario di Roma*, May 9, 1831.

Consalvi on the part of Pius VII. Mezzofanti was still as happy in his humble position as he had been in 1815. He still retained his early love for his native city and for the friends among whom he had now begun to grow old. But to persist farther would be ungracious. He could no longer be insensible to a wish so flattering and so earnestly enforced. It was not, however, until, as the Pope himself declared, "after a long siege," (*veramente un assedio*) that he finally acquiesced ;—overpowered, as it would seem, by that genuine and unaffected cordiality which was the great characteristic of the good Pope Gregory XVI.

"Holy Father," was his singularly graceful acknowledgment of the kind interest which the Pope had manifested in his regard, "people say that I can speak a great many languages. In no one of them, nor in them all, can I find words to express how deeply I feel this mark of your Holiness's regard."

It is hardly necessary to say that one of the very first visits which he paid in Rome, was to the Propaganda. On the morning after his arrival, the feast, as it would seem, of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, he went to the sacristy with the intention of saying mass; and having, with his habitual retiringness, knelt down to say the usual preparatory prayers without making himself known, he remained for a considerable time unobserved and therefore neglected. He was at length recognised by Dr. Cullen, the present archbishop of Dublin, (at that time professor of Scripture in the Propaganda,) who at once procured for the distinguished stranger the attention which he justly

deserved in such an institution. It is a pleasing illustration, at once of the retentiveness of his memory and of the simple kindliness of his disposition, that in an interview with Dr. Cullen not very long before his death, he reminded him of this circumstance, and renewed his thanks even for so trifling a service. After mass, he made his way, unattended, to one of the *camerate*, or corridors. The first room which he chanced to meet was that of a Turkish student, named Hassun, now archbishop of the United Greek Church at Constantinople. He at once entered into conversation with Hassun in Turkish. This he speedily changed to Romaic with a youth named Musabini, who is now the Catholic Greek bishop at Smyrna. From Greek he turned to English, on the approach of Dr. O'Connor, an Irish student, now bishop of Pittsburgh in the United States. As the unwonted sounds began to attract attention, the students poured in, one by one, each in succession to find himself greeted in his native tongue; till at length, the bell being rung, the entire community assembled, and gave full scope to the wonderful quickness and variety of his accomplishment. Dr. O'Connor describes it as the most extraordinary scene he has ever witnessed; and he adds a further very remarkable circumstance that, during the many new visits which Mezzofanti paid to the Propaganda afterwards, he never once forgot the language of any student with whom he had spoken on this occasion, nor once failed to address him in his native tongue.

The deputation returned to Bologna in the end of

June. Mezzofanti accompanied it, but only for the purpose of making arrangements for his permanent change of residence.

He had accepted the commission with exceeding reluctance, and it is painful to have to record that on this, the only occasion on which he consented to leave his habitual retirement, he was not suffered to escape his share of the rude shocks and buffets which seem to be inseparable from public life.

All who were most familiar with Mezzofanti, to whatever party in Italian politics they belonged, have borne testimony to the sincerity of his convictions and the entire disinterestedness of his views—a disinterestedness which had marked the entire tenor of his life, and had been attested by long and painful sacrifices. Nevertheless, on the return of the Bolognese deputation from Rome, he had the mortification to find his conduct misrepresented and his motives maligned. The marked attention which he had experienced at the hands of the Pope, was made a crime. His simple and long-tried loyalty—the spontaneous homage which a mind such as his renders almost by instinct—was denounced as the interested subserviency of a courtier; and the favours which had been bestowed on him in Rome, were represented as the price of his treason to Bologna.

Mezzofanti felt deeply these ungenerous and unfounded criticisms. His health was seriously affected by the chagrin which they occasioned; and these memories of his last days in Bologna often clouded in after years the happier reminiscences of his native city on which his mind delighted to dwell.

Owing to the unsettled condition of Italy during this year, but few Englishmen visited Bologna. Among these were Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Canon of Westminster (who also saw Mezzofanti in the following year in Rome,) and Mr. Milnes, of Frystone Hall, Yorkshire, father of the poet, Mr. Richard Monckton Milnes. The latter was much amused by Mezzofanti's proposing, when he heard he was a Yorkshire man, to speak Welsh with him, "*as Yorkshire lay so near Wales!*"

It would hardly be worth while to note this amusing blunder in English topography, (a blunder more remarkable in Mezzofanti, as in all geographical details he was ordinarily extremely accurate,) were it not that it is another testimony on the disputed question of his acquaintance with the Welsh language.

He left Bologna finally for Rome in October, 1831. The Pope afterwards used jokingly to say, that "the acquisition of Mezzofanti for Rome was the only good that came of the Revolution of Bologna in 1831." By the kind care of the Pope, he was provided with apartments in the Quirinal Palace, nearly opposite the Church of Saint Andrew—the same apartments at the window of which the lamented Monsignor Palma was shot during the late Revolution.

CHAPTER X.

[1831-33.]

It is one of Rochefoucauld's maxims, that "in order to establish a great reputation, it is not enough for one to possess great qualities, he must also economize them." If Mezzofanti had desired to act upon this prudent principle, he could not possibly have chosen a worse position than Rome.

From the very moment of his arrival there, his gift of language was daily, and almost hourly, exposed to an ordeal at once more varied and more severe than it would have encountered in any other city in the world. Without taking into account the many eminent linguists, native and foreign, for whom Rome has ever been celebrated; without reckoning the varying periodical influx of sight-seers, from every country in Europe, who are attracted to that city by the unrivalled splendour of her sacred ceremonial, and the more constant, though less noisy, stream of pilgrims from the remotest lands, who are drawn by duty, by devotion, or by ecclesiastical affairs, to the great

centre of Catholic unity ;—the permanent population of the Eternal City will be found to comprise a variety of races and tongues, such as would be sought in vain in any other region of the earth. From a very early period, the pious liberality, sometimes of the popes, sometimes of the natives of the various countries themselves, began to found colleges for the education, under the very shadow of the chair of Peter, of at least a select few among the clergy of each people ; and, notwithstanding the confiscations of later times, there are few among the more prominent nationalities which do not even still possess in Rome, either a special national establishment, or, at least, a special foundation for national purposes in some of the many general establishments of the city. In like manner, most of the great religious orders, both of the East and of the West, possess separate houses for each of the countries in which they are established; and few, even of the most superficial visitors of Rome, can have failed to observe, among the animated groups which throng the Pincian Hill or the Strada Pia, at the approach of the Ave Maria, the striking variety of picturesque costumes by which these national orders are distinguished. Each, again, of the several rites in communion with the Holy See—the Greek, the Syrian, the Coptic, the Armenian—has, for the most part, an archbishop or bishop resident at Rome, to afford information or counsel on affairs connected with its national usages, and to take a part in all the solemn ceremonials, as a living witness of the universality of the Church.

But before all, and more than all, is the great Urban College—the college of the Propaganda—which unites in itself all the nationalities already described, together with many others of which no type is found elsewhere in Europe. Every variety of language and dialect throughout the wide range of western Christendom;—every eastern form of speech

From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon;

many of the half explored languages of the northern and southern continents of America; and more than one of the rude jargons of north and north-eastern Africa, may be found habitually domiciled within its walls. In the year 1837, when Dr. Wap, a Dutch traveller, who has written well and learnedly on Rome, visited the establishment, the hundred and fourteen students who appeared upon its register, comprised no less than forty-one distinct nationalities.*

Amid the vast variety of speech with which he was thus brought habitually into contact, Mezzofanti, even if he had desired to "economize" his reputed gifts, could not possibly have done so without provoking a suspicion of their questionableness, or at least of their superficial character. Nor, on the other hand, would he have ventured to expose the undeniable reputation which he had already established, although upon a provincial theatre, to the ordeal which awaited him in the great centre of languages, living or dead, had he not been supported by the con-

* Mijne Reis naar Rome in het voorjaar van 1837. II. p. 35.

sciousness of the reality of his attainments, as well as attracted by the very prospect of increased facilities for pursuing and extending the researches which had been the business and the enjoyment of his life. At all events, we shall see that from the first moment of his establishment in Rome, so far from having "economized" his extraordinary faculty of language, he was most assiduous, and in truth prodigal, in its exercise.

Immediately on his arrival he was appointed canon of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. This, however, was but an earnest of the intentions of the Pope, who, from the first, destined him for the highest honours of the Roman Church. It is clear, nevertheless, from his correspondence, that his affections still clung to his beloved Bologna. On occasion of his first new year in his new residence, he received many letters from his old friends, conveying to him the ordinary new year's greetings. From his reply to one of these letters which was addressed to him by a friend, Signor Michele Ferrucci, professor of Eloquence in the university, we may gather how warm and cordial were the attachments which he had left behind.

Rome, January 4, 1852.

"The new-year greetings which, for so many years, I used to receive from you in person, were always most grateful to me, because I knew them to be the genuine expression of your affection for me. In like manner the kind wishes conveyed in your letter are no less acceptable, since they show me that separation has not diminished your regard. I shall always retain a lively sense of it; and wherever I may be, it shall be my endeavour

to give proofs by my conduct that I am not insensible to it. Let one of these be the assurance of my most zealous exertions to secure for you the change of position which you are seeking, from the chair of eloquence to that of assistant professor of archæology. I think it advisable that means should be taken to make known here the wishes of the professor himself, the Canonico Schiassi; and it is indispensable that the measure should not only originate with his eminence the arch-chancellor, but should have his most earnest support. So far as I am concerned, I shall leave nothing undone that may tend to further your wishes.

I was deeply affected in reading your wife's sonnets on the death of her sister and her father. May God grant that, this great affliction past, a heart so full of tenderness as hers, may meet nothing in life but joy and consolation in the continued prosperity of her dear family! Present my respects to her, and make my compliments to my old associates in the library. I never for a single day forget that happy spot, and I seldom cease to speak of it.

If there be any matter in which I can be of use to you, I beg of you not to spare me."

One of Mezzofanti's first impulses on his being established in Rome, was to turn to account, as a means of extending his store of languages, the manifold advantages of his new position. On a careful survey of the rich and varied resources supplied by the foreign ecclesiastical establishments of Rome, and especially by the great treasure-house of the Propaganda, he found that there was one language, and that a language to which he had long and anxiously looked forward—the Chinese—which was, as yet, entirely unrepresented; the native students destined for the mission of China, being at that time exclusively educated in the Chinese College at Naples. It

happened most opportunely that at this time Monsignor de Bossi, (afterwards administrator Apostolic of Nankin), was about to visit that institution, and proposed to Mezzofanti to accompany him ;—a proposal which, as filling up agreeably the interval of rest which he enjoyed before entering upon the routine of the duties which awaited him, he gladly accepted.

The Chinese College of Naples was founded in 1725, by the celebrated Father Matthew Ripa,* with the permission of the reigning Pope Benedict XIII, and was formally approved by a bull of Clement XIII, April 5, 1732.† In the earlier and more favoured days of the Chinese mission, although it was chiefly supplied by European clergy, yet the missionaries freely opened, not alone elementary schools, but seminaries for the training of native catechists who assisted in the work of the mission, even within the precincts of the Imperial City. But the unhappy divisions among the missionaries upon the well-known question, as to the lawfulness of the so-called "Chinese ceremonies ;" and the severe enactments which followed the final and decisive condemnation of these ceremonies by Clement XI., not only cut off all hope of this domestic supply of catechists, but effectually excluded all European missionaries from the Chinese Empire. The only hope, therefore, of sustaining the mission was to provide a supply of native

* The Memoirs of Father Ripa have enjoyed great popularity in the abridged form in which they are published in Murray's Home and Colonial Library. This abridgment, however, gives but little idea of the work itself.

† This Bull is in the *Bullarium* of the Propaganda.

clergy, who might pass unnoticed among the population, or who would at least possess one chance of security against detection, which the very appearance of a foreigner would preclude. With this view, Father Ripa brought together at Pekin a small number of youths, whom he hoped to train up under a native master, engaged by him for the purpose. A short experience of this plan, however, convinced him, not merely of its danger, but even of its absolute impracticability; and he saw that the only hope of success for such an institution would be, not only to place the establishment beyond the reach of persecution from the Chinese authorities, but, (as the great Pope Innocent III. had contemplated a college at Paris for native Greek youths),* even to withdraw the candidates altogether for a time from the contagion of domestic influences and domestic associations. Himself a Neapolitan, (having been born at Eboli, in the kingdom of Naples,) Ripa's thoughts naturally turned to his own country for the means of accomplishing his design; and, after numberless difficulties, he succeeding in transferring to his native city, under the name of "the Holy Family of Jesus Christ," the institution which he had projected at Pekin. It consists of two branches, the college, and the congregation. The latter is an asssociation of priests and lay brothers, (not bound, however, by religious vows), very similar in its constitution to the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. The object of their association is the care and direction of the College.

The College, on the other hand, is designed for the

* Epistola Innocent III. vol. II. 723.

purpose of educating and preparing for the priesthood, or at least for the office of catechist, natives of China, Cochin China, Pegu, Tonquin, and the Indian Peninsula. They are maintained free of all cost, and are conducted to Europe and back to their native country at the charge of the congregation; merely binding themselves to devote their lives, either as priests or as catechists, to the duties of their native mission, under the direction and jurisdiction of the sacred congregation of the Propaganda. Since the time of the withdrawal of the European missionaries from China, the mission has relied mainly upon this admirable institution; and even still its members continue to deserve well of the Church. The priest, Francis Tien, whose cruel sufferings for the faith are detailed by Mgr. Rizzolati in a letter published in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, July 1846, was a pupil of this college. So likewise is the excellent and zealous priest, Thomas Pian, who recently volunteered his services to the Propaganda as a missionary to the Chinese immigrants in California.

At the time of Mezzofanti's visit, March 23, 1832, the superior of the college of the Congregation was Father John Borgia, the last direct representative of the noble family of that name. He received the great linguist with the utmost cordiality; and during the entire time of his sojourn, the students and superiors vied with each other in their attentions to their distinguished guest. From the moment of his arrival he had thrown himself with all his characteristic energy into the study of the language; and notwith-

standing its proverbial difficulty, and its even to him entirely novel character, he succeeded in an incredibly short time in mastering all the essential principles of its rudimental structure. Most unfortunately, however, before he had time to pursue his advantage, his strength gave way under this excessive application, and he was seized with a violent fever,* by which his life was for some time seriously endangered. The fever was attended by delirium, the effect of which, according to several writers† who relate the circumstance, was to confuse his recollection of the several languages which he had acquired, and to convert his speech into a laughable jumble of them all. This, however, although an amusing traveller's story, is but a traveller's story after all. Mezzofanti himself told Cardinal Wiseman that the effect of his illness was not merely to confuse, but to *suspend his memory altogether*. He completely forgot all his languages. His mind appeared to return to its first uneducated condition of thought, and whatever he chanced to express in the course of his delirium was spoken in simple Italian, as though he had never passed outside of its limits.

* According to my informant at Naples, the affection under which Mezzofanti laboured is described by the local phrase "*rompergli le chiancarelle*,"—a Neapolitan idiom which expresses something like our own phrase that "his brains were addled." It was ascribed to the excessive difficulty of the Chinese, and to his own immoderate application. My informant also states that, at his worst moments, his mind was recalled at once from its wandering by the mere mention of the name of the Holy Father, to whom he was most tenderly attached.

† Fleck's Wissenschaftliche Reise, I. p. 94.

He was so debilitated by this illness, that immediately upon his convalescence it became necessary for him to return to Rome without attempting to resume his Chinese studies. Most opportunely, however, for his wishes, the authorities of the Propaganda some years afterwards transferred to Rome, as we shall see, a certain number of these Chinese students, with the view of enabling them to complete with greater advantage in the great missionary college the studies which they had commenced in what might almost be called a domestic institution. With their friendly assistance Mezzofanti completed what had been so inauspiciously interrupted by his illness.*

The fatigues of the homeward journey brought on a renewal of the fever; and for some weeks after his return to Rome, (from which he had been absent about two months,) he suffered considerably from its effects. Happily, however, it left no permanent trace in his constitution, and the autumn of 1832 found him engaged once more with all his usual energy in his favourite pursuit. The intention of the Pope in inviting him to Rome had been to place him at the head of the Vatican Library, as successor of the celebrated Monsignor Angelo Mai, then First Keeper of that collection, who was about to be transferred to the Secretaryship of the Propaganda. The arrangements connected with this change of offices, however,

* After the Revolution of 1848-9 the Chinese students for a time ceased to be sent to the Propaganda. Their entire course was completed in the Neapolitan College. They have again resumed their attendance.

were not yet completed, and Mezzofanti availed himself industriously of this interval of comparative leisure which the delay placed at his disposal. His position at Rome brought him into contact with several languages of which he had never before met any living representative; and many of those which he had hitherto had but rare and casual opportunities of speaking or hearing spoken were now placed within his reach as languages of daily and habitual use. In the Maronite convent of Sant' Antonio he had ancient and modern Syriac, with its various modifications, at his command. For Armenian, Persian, and Turkish, the two learned Mechitarist communities of San Giuseppe and Sant' Antonio supplied abundant and willing masters. One of these, the eminent linguist Padre Aucher, whose English-Armenian Grammar Lord Byron more than once commemorates as their joint production,* was himself master of no less than twelve languages. To the Ruthenian priests of S. Maria in Navicella, he could refer for more than one of the Sclavonic languages. The Greek college of St. Athanasius, owing to the late troubles in Greece, was then untenanted, but there were several Greek students in the Propaganda, awaiting its re-opening, which took place in 1837. The celebrated Persian scholar, Sebastiani, had just recently returned to Rome. Signor Drach, a learned Hebrew convert, was Librarian of the Propaganda; and a venerable Egyptian priest, Don Georgio Alabada, supplied

* Letters and Journals, III. 313, 315, 334.

an opportunity of practice in the ancient Coptic, as well as in the Arabic dialect of modern Egypt.

In the German College were to be found not only all the principal tongues of the Austrian Empire, German, Magyar, Czechish and Polish, but many of its more obscure languages—Romanic, Wallachian, Servian, and many minor varieties of German, Rhetian, (the dialect of the Graubünden, or Grisons) Dutch, Flemish, and Frisian. In reference to some of these languages, I have been unable to avail myself of the recollections of more than one student of this noble institution, as witness of Mezzofanti's extraordinary proficiency.

He was on terms of the closest intimacy with the Abbé Lacroix, of the French church of St. Lewis, since known as the editor of the *Systema Theologicum* of Leibnitz. The Rector of the English College, Dr. (now Cardinal) Wiseman, even then a distinguished orientalist, and professor of oriental languages in the Roman university, and the Rector of the Irish College, the present Archbishop of Dublin, were his especial friends. In both these establishments, he was a welcome and not unfrequent visitant.

The several embassies, also, afforded another, though of course less familiar school. He often met M. Bunsen, the Minister Resident of Prussia; he was frequently the guest of the Marquis de Lavradio, the Portuguese ambassador, and Don Manuel de Barras, whose letter attesting the purity and perfection of Mezzofanti's Castilian, is now before me, was an attachè of the Spanish Embassy.

The Propaganda, however, itself a perfect micro-

cosm of language, was his principal, as well as his favourite school. For his simple and lively disposition, the society of the young had always possessed a special charm ; and to his very latest hour of health, he continued to find his favourite relaxation among the youths of this most interesting institution. In summer, he commonly spent an hour, in winter an hour and a half, in the Propaganda, partly in the library, partly among the students, among whom he held the place alternately of master and of pupil ;—and, what is still more curious, he occasionally appeared in both capacities, first learning a language from the lips of a student, and then in his turn instructing his teacher in the grammatical forms and constitution of the very language he had taught him !

Independently, indeed, of study altogether, the Propaganda was for years his favourite place of resort, and there was no place where his playful and ingenuous character was more pleasingly displayed. He mixed among the pupils as one of themselves, with all the ease of an equal, and without a shade of that laborious condescension which often makes the affability of superiors an actual penance to those whom they desire to render happy. While the cheerfulness of his conversation was often tempered by grave advice or tender exhortation, it was commonly lively and even playful, and frequently ran into an amusing exhibition which those who witnessed never could forget. In the free and familiar intercourse which he encouraged and maintained, there sometimes arose sportive trials of skill, in which the great amusement

of his young friends consisted in endeavouring to puzzle him by a confusion of languages, and to provoke him into answering in a language different from that in which he was addressed. The idea of these trials (which reminded one of the old-fashioned game of "cross-question,") appears to have originated in a good-humoured surprise, which the Pope Gregory XVI. played off on Mezzofanti soon after his arrival in Rome. The linguist, however, was equal to the emergency. Like the good knight, Sir Tristram, he proved

> "Most master of himself, and least encumbered,
> When over-matched, entangled, and outnumbered."

"One day," says M. Manavit, "Gregory XVI. provided an agreeable surprise for the polyglot prelate, and a rare treat for himself, in an improvised conversation in various tongues—a regular linguistic tournament. Among the mazy alleys of the Vatican gardens, behind one of the massive walls of verdure which form its peculiar glory, the Pope placed a certain number of the Propaganda students in ambuscade. When the time came for his ordinary walk, he invited Mezzofanti to accompany him; and, as they were proceeding gravely and solemnly, on a sudden, at a given signal, these youths grouped themselves for a moment on their knees before his Holiness, and then, quickly rising, addressed themselves to Mezzofanti, each in his own tongue, with such an abundance of words and such a volubility of tone, that, in the jargon of dialects, it was almost impossible to hear, much less to understand them. But Mezzofanti did

not shrink from the conflict. With the promptness and address which were peculiar to him, he took them up singly, and replied to each in his own language, with such spirit and elegance as to amaze them all."

In addition to these increased opportunities of exercise, he also derived much assistance, in the more obscure and uncommon department of his peculiar studies, from the libraries of Rome, and especially from that of the Propaganda. The early elementary books, grammars, vocabularies, catechisms, &c., prepared for the use of missionaries in the remote missions, have for the most part been printed at the Propaganda press: and the library of that institution contains in manuscript similar elementary treatises in languages for the study of which no printed materials existed at that time. To all these, of course, the great linguist enjoyed the freest access; and it can hardly be doubted that, during the first year of his residence in Rome, he did more to enlarge his stock of words, and to perfect his facility and fluency in conversation, than perhaps in any previous year of his life.

Immediately upon Mgr. Mai's appointment to the Secretaryship of the Propaganda, May 15th, 1833, Mezzofanti was installed as *Primo Custode*, First Keeper of the Vatican Library; and about the same time he was appointed to a Canonry in St. Peter's. In the midst of the warm congratulations which he received from all sides, it was not without considerable distrust of his own powers, that he entered upon the office of Librarian, as the successor of a scholar so eminent as Angelo Mai.

"It is no ordinary distinction," he wrote to his friend Cav. Pezzana, "to be called to succeed Mgr Mai in the care of the Vatican Library,—a post which has derived new brilliancy from the brilliant qualities of its latest occupant: nor can I overcome my apprehension lest the honour which I may gain by my first few hours of office may decline, when it comes to be seen how great is the difference between this distinguished man and his successor. This fear, I confess, is a drawback upon my joy at this happy event; but at the same time, I trust it will also stimulate me to make every effort that the lustre of a position in itself so honourable, may not be tarnished in my person. I have only to wish that your congratulation, coming as it does from a kindly feeling, may be an earnest of the successful exercise of the diligence I am determined to use in my new career, which is all the more grateful and honourable to me, as it furnishes more frequent occasions of corresponding with you."

There is another of his letters of the same period, which to many perhaps will appear trivial, but which points in a still more amiable light, not alone his unaffected piety and humility, but the homely simplicity of his disposition, and the affection with which he cherished all the domestic relations. It is addressed to his cousin, Antonia, who has already been mentioned in a former part of this Memoir, but who, for some years before Mezzofanti's leaving Bologna, had been afflicted with blindness. On the occasion of his appointment, this lady employed the pen of a common friend, Signora Galli, of Bologna, to convey her congratulations to Mezzofanti. It would seem, moreover, that she had intended on the same occasion to make him a present; which Mezzofanti, out of consideration for her limited means, had thought it expedient to decline.

"*Bologna, December* 14, 1833.

My most esteemed cousin,

Accept, in return for all your kind congratulations and good wishes, my most sincere prayer that God may bestow upon you all the choicest blessings of the approaching festival. There is *one* present which it is in your power to make me, and one which is especially suitable to a person so entirely devoted to God as you are: it is to offer up the holy communion for me on one of the coming festivals. I, upon my part, will offer the Holy Sacrifice for you on the feast of St. John; and on the same day I will make a special memento of your good parish priest, the abate Landrino, who once, upon the same day, showed me a kindness which I shall never forget. Pray remember me to him, and also to dear Signora Galli, in whom, as your secretary, you have found an admirable exponent of your affectionate sentiments, for which I am deeply grateful to you both. My nephews unite in best wishes for your health and happiness. Make the best report from me at home, and believe me always, your most affectionate cousin,

JOSEPH MEZZOFANTI."

CHAPTER XI

[1834.]

It may perhaps be convenient to interrupt the narrative at this point, for the purpose of bringing together a number of miscellaneous reports regarding certain languages of minor note ascribed to Mezzofanti, which, through the kindness of many friends, have come into my hands. I shall select those languages especially, respecting his acquaintance with which some controversy has arisen. As my principal object in collecting these reports has simply been to obtain a body of trustworthy materials, whereupon to found an estimate of the real extent of the great linguist's attainments, I shall not consider it necessary here to follow any exact philological arrangement; but shall present the notices of the several languages, as nearly as possible in the order of the years to which they belong, reserving for a later time the general summary of the results.

I shall commence with a language to which some allusions have been made already—the Welsh.

Mr. Watts, in his admirable paper so often cited, has recorded it, as the opinion of Mr. Thomas Ellis of the British Museum—"a Welsh gentleman, who saw Mezzofanti more than once in his later years—that he was unable to keep up, or even understand, a conversation in the language of the Cymry."* It is difficult to reconcile this statement with the positive assertion of Mr. Harford, which we have seen in a former page;—that, even as early as 1817, he himself "heard Mezzofanti speak Welsh." It might perhaps be suggested, as a solution of the difficulty, that in the long interval between Mr. Harford's visit, and that of Mr. Ellis, Mezzofanti's memory, tenacious as it was, had failed in this one particular; but, about the period to which we have now arrived, there are other witnesses who are quite as explicit as Mr. Harford.

Early in the year 1834, Dr. Forster, an English gentleman who has resided much abroad, and who (although, from the circumstance of his books being privately printed, little known to the English public) is the author of several curious and interesting works, visited Mezzofanti in the Vatican Library.

"To-day," (May 14, 1834) he writes in a work entitled *Annales d'un Physicien Voyageur,* "I visited Signor Mezzofanti, celebrated for his knowledge of more than forty ancient and modern languages. He is secretary of the Vatican—a small man with an air of great intelligence, and with the organs of language highly developed in his face. We talked a great deal about

* On the extraordinary Powers of Card. Mezzofanti, p. 122.

philology, and he told me many interesting anecdotes of his manner of learning different languages. As I was myself acquainted with ten languages, I wished to test the ability of this eminent linguist; and therefore proposed that we should leave Italian for the moment, and amuse ourselves by speaking different other languages. Having spoken in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Dutch, I said at last:—

'My friend, I have almost run out my stock of modern languages, except some which you probably do not know.'

'Well,' said he, 'the dead languages, Latin and Greek, are matters which every one learns, and which every educated man is familiar with. We shall not mind them. But pray tell me what others you speak.'

'I speak a little Welsh,' I replied.

'Good,' said he, 'I also know Welsh.' And he began to talk to me at once, like a Welsh peasant. He knew also the other varieties of Celtic, Gælic, Irish, and Bas-Breton."*

Some time after the visit of Mr. Harford, too, but before Mezzofanti had left Bologna, when Dr. Baines, then Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of England, (in which Wales was included,) was passing through that city, the abate, concluding (erroneously, as Dr. Baines had the mortification to confess,) that the bishop of Wales must necessarily be an authority upon its language, came to him with a Welsh Bible, to ask his assistance on some points connected with the pronunciation, being already acquainted with the language itself.†

* Annales d'un Physicien Voyageur, par F. Forster, M.D. pp. 60—1, Bruges, 1851.

† Miss Mitford, in her "Recollections of a Literary Life," vol. II. 203) relates this anecdote differently. She has confounded together two different periods at which Dr. Baines met Mezzofanti—the first at Bologna when this incident occurred, the second many years later, when Mezzofanti was Librarian of the Vatican. The anecdote, as related above, was communicated to me by the late Rev. Dr. Cox, of Southampton, who learned it from the bishop himself.

Another of his visitors, while at Bologna, has put on record a testimony to the same effect, which, although it does not expressly allude to Mezzofanti's speaking the language, yet evidently supposes his acquaintance with it, and which moreover is interesting for its own sake. I allude to Dr. W. F. Edwards, of Paris, author of an able and curious essay addressed to the historian, Amedée Thierry, "On the Physiological Characters of the Races of Man, in their Relation to History." In this essay, while combating the popular notion, that in England the ancient British race has been completely displaced by the various northern conquerors who have overrun the countey, Dr. Edwards alleges in support of his own work, which he heard expressed by Mezzofanti, and which, although founded on purely philological principles,* he regards as a singular confirmation of his own physiological deductions.

"I owe," he says, "to the celebrated Mezzofanti, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Bologna, an example of what I have been urging; and I am glad to repeat it here for more reasons than one. You will see in it a further confirmation of the conclusion regarding the Britons of England, which I have deduced from sources of a very different kind. If there is any characteristic which distinguishes English from the other modern languages of Europe, it is the extreme irregularity of its pronunciation. In other languages, when you have once mastered the fundamental sounds, you are enabled, by the aid of certain general rules, to pronounce the words with a tolerable approach to accuracy, even without understanding the meaning. In English you can never

* The relation of the English language to the ancient British tongue is discussed by Latham, "The English Language," vol. I. p. 344-5.

pronounce until you have actually learned the language. Mezzofanti, in speaking to me of Welsh, traced to that language the origin of this peculiarity of the English. I had no necessity to ask him through what channel. I knew, as well as he, that the English could not have borrowed from the Welsh; and that, before the Saxon invasion, the Britons had spoken the same language which afterwards became peculiar to Wales. Thus of his own accord and without my seeking for it, he gave me a new proof, entirely independent of the reasons which had already led me to the conviction that, despite the Saxon conquest, the Britons had never ceased to exist in England. They had for centuries been deemed extinct; and yet he recognises their descendants, so to speak, by the sound of their voice, as I have recognised them by their features! What more is needed to establish the identity?"

In the marked conflict between these testimonies and the strong adverse opinion expressed by Mr. Ellis, "that the Cardinal was unable to keep up or even understand a conversation in the language of the Cymry," nay that "he could not even read an ordinary book with facility," I have had inquiries made through several Welsh friends, the result of which, coupled with the authorities already cited, satisfies me that Mr. Ellis was certainly mistaken in his judgment. The belief that Mezzofanti knew and spoke Welsh appears to be universal. Mr. Rhys Powel, a Welsh gentleman who was personally acquainted with him, often heard that he understood Welsh, and I have received a similar assurance from a Welsh clergyman of my acquaintance. Mr. Rhys Powel, mentions the name of the late Mr. Williams of Aberpergwin, as having "actually conversed with the Cardinal in Welsh," during a visit to Rome some time before his eminence's death; and a short com-

position of his in that language, which I submitted to two eminent Welsh scholars, is pronounced by them not only correct, but idiomatic in its structure and pharseology.

With such a number of witnesses, entirely independent of each other, and spread over so long a period, attesting Mezzofanti's knowledge of Welsh, I can hardly hesitate to conclude that Mr. Ellis's impression to the contrary must have arisen from some accidental misunderstanding, or perhaps from one of those casual failures from which even the most perfect are not altogether exempt. The concluding paragraph of Dr. Edward's notice is interesting, although upon a different ground.

"It is to be regretted," he adds, "that a man who surpasses all others by his prodigious knowledge of languages, should content himself with what is but an evidence of his own learning, and should conceal from the world the science upon which that learning is founded. It is not to his prodigious memory and the, so to say, inborn aptitude of his mind for retaining words and their combinations, that he owes the facility with which he masters all languages, but to his eminently analytical mind, which rapidly penetrates their genius and makes it its own. I collect from himself that he studies languages, rather through their spirit than through their letter. What do we know of the spirit of languages? Almost nothing. But if Mezzofanti would communicate to the world the fruit of his observations, we should see a new science arise amongst us."*

It will be recollected that Flemish was one of the minor languages which he acquired during his residence at Bologna. From the time of his settling at

* Des Caracteres Physiologiques des Races Humaines considerés dans leur Rapports avec l'Histoire. Par. W. F. Edwards, p. 102.

Rome, his opportunities of practice in this and the kindred dialect of Holland, were almost of daily occurrence. One of the earliest appears to have been afforded by his intercourse with a young student of the Germanic College, the abbé Malou, since one of the most distinguished of the Catholic literati of Belgium,* for several years Professor of Scripture in the University of Louvain, and now Bishop of Bruges. Monseigneur Malou has been good enough to note down for me his recollections of his intercourse with Mezzofanti, in so far as they relate to his native language.

"During my stay in Rome (1831-35), I conversed several times in Flemish with Cardinal Mezzofanti, and I was thus enabled to ascertain that he understood our language thoroughly. He spoke to me of the works of Cats and Vondel, two distinguished Flemish poets, which he had read. Nevertheless, I fancied that I perceived his vocabulary to be rather limited. He often repeated the same words and phrases. He spoke with a Brabant accent, for he had learned Flemish from some young men of Brussels, who studied at the University of Bologna, in which his Eminence was at that time Librarian. Monsignor Mezzofanti, after I had spoken, remarked of himself, that I, being a Fleming, did not speak as they do in Brabant; and hence he had a difficulty in catching some of my expressions, which he requested me to repeat. It is, therefore, not quite correct to say, that he knew our different dialects; but, if he had had occasion to learn them, he could, without doubt, have done so with great ease.

Some days before my departure from Rome, in May, 1835, I met this learned dignitary in the sacristy of S. Peter's. He at

* It can scarcely be necessary to allude to Mgr Malou's admirable book On the Reading of the Bible in the vulgar Tongue. His interesting essay On the Authorship of the Imitation of Christ, is less known.

once accosted me in Flemish; and, when I had replied, he upbraided me with having forgotten my mother tongue, for I mixed up with it, he said, some German words. The reproach was well founded: for I had passed about three years in the German College, where I had learned a little German, and had had meanwhile no occasion to speak Flemish. Such a reproof from an Italian, who thus gave lessons in Flemish to a Fleming, struck me as exceeding droll, and amused me not a little. This anecdote shows what minute attention the learned Cardinal paid to the boundary lines of kindred tongues.

I have heard Mezzofanti, in the course of one evening, speaking Italian, English, German, Flemish, Russian, French, and the Sicilian and Neapolitan dialects of Italian."*

This poverty of his Flemish vocabulary, however, disappeared with practice. Another learned Belgian ecclesiastic, Monsignor Aerts, who subsequently to the sojourn of M. Malou in Rome, resided there for many years, as Rector of the Belgian College, reports as follows of Mezzofanti's Flemish, such as he found it in 1837 and the following year.

"I was intimately acquainted with Cardinal Mezzofanti, during my sojourn in Rome; that is to say, from 1837 to the moment of his death. I saw him frequently. After the establishment in Rome of the Belgian Ecclesiastical College, of which I was the first President, and he the Patron, I had still more frequent relations with his eminence. I spoke to him several times in each month. Part of our conversation always took place in Flemish. I can assure you that he never had to look for a word, and that he spoke our language most freely, and with a purity of expression and pronunciation not always to be met with among our own countrymen. One day that I was admitted along with the Cardinal, to an audience of the Pope Gregory XVI, during his hour

* For this and the following notices I am indebted to the kind offices of my friend Canon Donnet of Brussels.

of recreation, His Holiness expressed a desire to hear him speaking Flemish with me. We then began a little discussion about the relative difficulty of German and Flemish. His Eminence thought Flemish the harder of the two. The Pope called him 'a living Pentecost.' He also wrote Flemish poetry: and one day he gave me several verses of his own composition, to send in token of remembrance to a young gentleman from Bruges whom he had confirmed at Rome. Mezzofanti not only knew the language itself thoroughly, but he was moreover acquainted with its history and with the principal Flemish and Dutch authors. I heard him speak of the works of Vondel, Cats, David, &c. He spoke and pronounced Dutch equally well. He said, however, that, the modern Hollanders had changed the language by approximating to the German. He knew, also, some of the local dialects of Flemish, especially that of Brussels. He could even distinguish the inhabitants of Brussels by their accent, of which I have more than once been witness. When he saw a Fleming, he always saluted him in his own tongue; as he indeed did with all foreigners.

In 1838, Cardinal Sterckx, Archbishop of Malines, paid a visit to Rome, and I had the honour of being present during several conversations which he held in Flemish with Cardinal Mezzofanti. The latter once took a fancy to have a little Flemish conversation with his colleague, in a consistory which the Pope held at this time: and he himself playfully remarked that probably that was the first time, since the origin of the Church, that two cardinals had talked Flemish in a papal consistory. Cardinal Sterckx told me this anecdote the same day."

The complete success with which he overcame the deficiency that M. Malou had observed in 1831, and the curious mastery of the various dialects which his singularly exquisite perception of the minutest peculiarities of language enabled him to acquire, are attested by another witness of the same period, Father Van Calven of the same city.

"On the 6th February, 1841," he writes, "the Cardinal, who was no less kind and affable than learned, administered the first communion to my cousin, Leo van Oockerout, who was then with his friends in Rome. Being a Belgian, a friend, and a relative, I was invited to be present at the ceremony, which took place in the Church of S. Peter, over the tomb of SS. Peter and Paul. Cardinal Mezzofanti celebrated the Holy Sacrifice; and after the Gospel, or perhaps immediately before the child's communion, he made a little discourse in French, in reference to the beautiful occasion which had drawn us together. This little discourse, which was very simple, was in excellent French. After the ceremony was over, he called us all into the sacristy, and there we had a conversation in Flemish. His eminence distinguished the different dialects of our Belgian provinces perfectly. Thus I remember distinctly that he said to us: 'I learned Flemish from a native of Brabant, and this is the way I pronounce the word; but, you from Flanders, pronounce it thus.'—I forget what was the word about which there was question; but at any rate, the Cardinal was quite correct in his observation."

The same curiously delicate power of "discriminating the various dialects of the language, and of distinguishing by their accents, the inhabitants of the various provinces of Belgium," are attested by another member of the same society, Father Legrelle. On the eve of this gentleman's return to Belgium, he asked the Cardinal to be so good as to write his name in his *Album de Voyage*. On the very instant, and in F. Legrelle's presence, his Eminence penned these Flemish verses, which he gave to M. Legrelle as a souvenir :—

God wept, en wyst den weg tot de volkomenheid;
Hoort zyne stem, myn Vriend, de stemme der waerheid.*

* "God calls, and points out the path of perfection,
Hearken my friend, to His voice—the voice of Truth."

One of M. Legrelle's companions, M. Leon Wilde, a native of Holland, and now a member of the Jesuit Society at Katwick, bears the same testimony to the facility and elegance with which the Cardinal spoke Dutch. M. Wilde also mentions his having written some verses in that language. But a "Tour to Rome"* by a Dutch professor, Dr. Wap, published at Breda, in 1839, contains so full and so interesting a notice of the great linguist, in reference to this department of his accomplishment, that, without referring further to M. Wilde's letter, I shall content myself with translating the most important passages of Dr. Wap's account of his visit. The author, then a professor in the military college of Breda, is now resident at Utrecht.

"Joseph Mezzofanti," he writes, "is at present† in his sixty-fifth year. He is of a slight figure, pale complexion, black hair which is beginning to turn gray, a piercing eye, quick utterance, and an air full of good humour, but not very intellectual, so that one would hardly expect to discover faculties so extraordinary under such an exterior. The first time I saw him was in the Vatican library, in the large hall which is furnished with tables, for the accommodation of those who wish to read or to take notes. He was busy distributing books, and at the same time was talking to an English lady accompanied by some English gentlemen. I afterwards spent an hour or two with this family, and learned that Mezzofanti had written in the lady's album four very graceful English lines, regarding America, whence she had come, and Vienna, where she was going to reside. As soon as the librarian noticed any foreigner, he at once began a conversation with him, and carried it on, no matter what might be the stranger's idiom. Prince Michael of Russia was amazed at the ease and volubility with which Mezzofanti spoke the Polish language. He accosted

* Mijne Reis naar Rom in het Voorjahr van 1837. Door Dr. Jan J. F. Wap., 2 vols, 8vo., Breda, 1839.

† In the year 1837. This is a slight mistake: he was only sixty-three.

me in English, which has in some measure become indigenous to Rome: but, finding I was from Holland, he at once continued the conversation in the *Brussels* dialect (as he called it,) and told me how scanty the means were of which he had been able to avail himself in the study of Flemish. These were: a Flemish grammar; two authors, (Bolhuis and Ten Kate,) with whom he was acquainted; and finally, Vondel and Cats, whom he had carefully read. He had never seen any of Bilderdyk's works, and he inquired whether this scholar had not introduced a dialect into the Dutch language. When I had given him the necessary information, and told him that Bilderdyk, besides a hundred other works, had written a book on the characters of the Alphabet, another on the Gender of Substantives, and three volumes on their roots, his delight was extreme, and he expressed a great desire to possess these works. I undertook to send them to him, and I took care to redeem my promise, as soon as I returned home.* After this interview, I did not presume to manifest my earnest desire for any further interviews with him: but Mezzofanti anticipated my wishes, and invited me to come and see him at the Propaganda, as often as I liked. There it is that he spends some hours, every evening, among the students, talking with each in his own tongue. I took advantage of his kind proposal, and had thus an opportunity of getting a nearer view of this college of the Propaganda.

* * * * * * *

Nowhere will one find so many resources for amassing treasures of knowledge united together, as in the vast college of the Propaganda.

* * * * * * *

Here are assembled a hundred and fourteen students from forty-one different countries. At my request, the Rector caused the Pater Noster to be written by sixteen foreign students in their respective languages. Here, in the evening, in the midst of these various nations, I met Mezzofanti, who seemed to belong to each of them. He spoke Chinese with Leang of Canton, as

* These books are found upon the Catalogue, p. 105.

easily as he spoke Dutch with Mr. Steenhof* of Utrecht. I will never forget the instructive hours which I spent there. The natural frankness of Mezzofanti, his free and communicative conversation, his easy tone, his gay disposition, all rendered my farewell visit, which I twice repeated, very painful to me.

Amidst so many grave employments, Mezzofanti goes twice each week to the house of the orphans, to teach them the catechism, and to the barracks of the Swiss soldiers to instruct them in the principles of religion. The library requires his care twice in the week, for several hours in the morning; in the afternoon he gives lessons to the pupils of the Propaganda, whose studies he superintends; to his care are confided the public discourses delivered on the Epiphany: almost all foreigners come to visit him; in fine, he pays his visits in his humble equipage, and attends at the Pope's court when pressing affairs requires his presence; and, notwithstanding so many duties and occupations, he still finds time to assist at the divine offices. Who will not feel profound respect and sincere admiration for such a man?

I will here subjoin some lines which I wrote *extempore* in Mezzofanti's album, together with his immediate reply.

'Wie ooit de Pinkstergaaf in twijfel durfde trekken.
Sta hier beschaamd, verplet voor Mezzofanti's geest,
Hij eere in hem den man, die de aard ten tolk kan strekken.
Wiens brein in 't taalgeheim van alle volken leest.
Aanvaard, ô Telg van't Zuid, den eerbiedgroet van't Noorden,
Maar denk, terwijl nu oog mijn nietig schrift beziet,
Al mist der Batten spraak Italjes zang akkoorden,
Hun tongval of hun ziel leent zich tot vleijen niet.'

My veritable impromptu instantly called forth this beautiful answer from Mezzofanti:—

'Mynheer! als uw fraaj schrift kwam heden voor mijne oogen,
Door Uw' goedaardigheid was ikheel opgetogen,
En zooveel in mijn geest zooveel in't hart opklom,
Dat mijne tong verbleef med vijftig taalen stom.

* Afterwards Professor in the Catholic Seminary of Warmond, in Holland, and at present Curé at Soest, in the province of Utrecht.

Nu, opdat ik niet schijn U een ondankbaar wezen,
Bid ik U in mijn hart alleen te willen lezen.

Joseph Mezzofanti.

Rome, den 17 *April,* 1837.'

After writing these lines, he asked me if there were any mistakes in them, and, if so, if I would be good enough to point them out to him. I then noticed the word *fraaj* in the first line, knowing he would reply that that the letter *i* at the end of a word should be replaced by a *j*. The *aa* in *taalen*, in the fourth line, he justified by a reference to the Flemish grammar which he used at the time. As for the *d* in the preposition *med*, which occurs in the same line, he contended that this was the proper orthography of the word, as it was an abbreviation of *mede*. I would have been greatly surprised at all this, if I had not previously had occasion to admire the delicate ear which this giant of linguistic learning possessed for the subtleties of pronunciation, and the wonderful perspicacity of his orthographical system: especially as he had expressed to me his just disapprobation of the foreign words which some of our countrymen are letting slip into their conversation. He had already given proof to another traveller from Holland that he was perfectly acquainted with the difference between the words *nimmer* and *nooit*, so that he hardly ever used one for the other."

* "Let him who dares to doubt the gift of Pentecost, stand ashamed and confounded before the mind of Mezzofanti. In him, let him honour that man who is fit to be the earth's interpreter—whose intellect penetrates the language-secret of all nations.

"Accept, son of the South, the respectful salutation of the North. But think, while your eye beholds my poor address, that if the Batavians' language lacks Italian melody, their tongue and soul are both averse to flattery."

Mezzofanti's reply:—

"Sir, when first the day my eyes were cast upon your beautiful address, I was quite enraptured by your great kindness. It so raised up my mind and heart, that, although master of fifty languages, my tongue remained speechless—But lest I should seem an ingrate, I beg you just to read my heart."

Side by side with the Dutch traveller's sketch, may be placed a still more lively account of Mezzofanti by another visitor of the Vatican, the poet Frankl, a Bohemian by birth, but chiefly known by his German writings. This sketch, besides the allusion to Mezzofanti's skill in the poet's native language, Bohemian, contains a slight, but not uninteresting specimen of Mezzofanti's German vocabulary, and, moreover, illustrates very curiously the attention which he seems always to have given to the general principles of harmony, and his acquaintance with the metrical capabilities of more than one ancient and modern language. The Signor Luzatto, to whose introductory letter Frankl refers, was a friend of Mezzofanti—a distinguished Italian Jew—himself an accomplished linguist, and well known to orientalscholars by his contributions to the *Archives Israelites*, and by a work on the Babylonian Inscriptions.

"Having furnished myself," writes Herr Frankl, "with a letter of introduction from Luzatto of Padua, I went to the Vatican Library, of which Mezzofanti was the head. His arrival was looked for every moment; and I occupied the interval by examining the long, well lighted gallery of antiquities which is outside, and which also leads into the halls that contain the masterpieces of ancient art in marble. I was in the act of reading the inscription upon one of the many marble slabs which are inserted in the wall, when a stranger who, except myself, was the sole occupant of the gallery, said to me; 'Here comes Monsignor Mezzofanti!'

An undersized man, somewhat disposed towards corpulency, in a violet cassock falling to the ancle, and a white surplice which reached to the knee, came briskly, almost hurriedly, towards us. He carried his four-cornered violet cap in his hand, and

thus I was better able to note his lively, though not striking features, and his grey hair still mingled with black. About his lips played a smile, which I afterwards observed to be their habitual expression. He appeared to be not far from sixty. When he came sufficiently near, I advanced to meet him with a silent bow, and he at once received me with the greeting in German, '*Seyn Sie mir willkommen!*' ('You are welcome.')

'I am surprised, Monsignor,' I replied, 'that you address me in German, although I have not spoken a word as yet.' 'Oh,' said he, 'a great many foreigners of all countries come to visit me, and I have acquired a certain routine—pardon me, I should have said a certain 'knack,' (die Routine—verzeihen sie, 'die gewandtheit' sollte ich sagen,—) of discovering their nationality from their physiognomy, or rather from their features.'

'I am sorry, Monsignor,' I replied, 'that it is my ill fortune to belie this knack of yours. I am a native of Bohemia, although not of Bohemian race, and Bohemian is my mother tongue.'

"To what nationality, then, do you belong?" asked Mezzofanti in Bohemian, without a moment's hesitation."

He afterwards changed the language to Hebrew.

Frankl adds, that on a second visit to the reading room of the Vatican, he found the gay animated Monsignor in the ordinary black dress of a priest; and took this opportunity to present him a copy of his "Colombo," in which he had written the inscription, "*Dem Sprachen-chamæleon Mezzofanti.*" ("To Mezzofanti, the Chameleon of language".)

"'Ha,' said Mezzofanti, with a smile, 'I have had numberless compliments paid me; but this is a spick and span new one,' (funkelnagel-neu)

Upon this word he laid a special emphasis, as if to call my attention to his well known familiarity with unusual words.

'I see,' he continued, 'you have adopted the Italian form of cantos and stanzas.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'the Germans nowadays, for the most part, do homage to the Italian forms.'

'At last!' said he, with a smile not unmixed with triumph.

'Schlegel, Bürger, and Platen,' I said, 'have written sonnets quite as harmonious as Petrarch's, and Tasso's stanza has found its rival among the Germans.'

'Well, at all events,' replied Mezzofanti, 'the Germans have not succeeded in hexameters. Klopstock's are incorrect and inharmonious. What harmony is there in the line:—

'Sing, unsterbliche Seele, des sündigen Menschen Erlösung!'

Where is the cæsura—speaking to you, I should say, *abschnitt*—in this line? Voss, it is true, wrote correctly; and yet an Italian will hang down his chin whenever Voss's hexameters are read. As for Goethe, what sort of poetry is his? You know his elegies—for example, the hexameter which ends

———'blaustrumpf und violet strumpf!'*

Surely he must have taken the Germans for a hard-hearted nation!'

I quoted for him the burlesque couplet which was composed in ridicule of Schiller's and Goethe's distichs.

'In Weimar und Jenam acht man Hexameter wie den,
Und die Pentameter sind noch erbärmlicher.'

He repeated it at once after me, and seemed to wish to impress it on his mind.

'Do you know,' he pursued, 'what language I place before all others, next to Greek and Italian, for constructive capability and rythmical harmoniousness?—The Hungarian. I know some pieces of the later poets of Hungary, the melody of which took me completely by surprise. Mark its future history, and you will see in it a sudden outburst of poetic genius, which will fully

* This is not quite correctly cited—The passage is in the sixth of the Elegies, "aus Rom," [vol. I. p. 48. Paris, 1836.]

——— So hab' ich von Herzen,
Rothstrumpf immer gehasst und violet-strumpf dazu.

It certainly deserves all the ridicule which Mezzofanti heaps on it, and might well make

——— the Muses, on their racks,
Scream like the winding of ten thousand jacks.

The allusion to 'red stocking' and 'violet stocking,' is one of Goethe's habitual sneers at the Catholic prelacy.

confirm my prediction. 'The Hungarians themselves do not seem to be aware what a treasure they have in their language.'*

"'It would be in the highest degree interesting,' said I, 'if you would draw up a comparative sketch of the metrical capabilities of all the various languages that you speak. Who is there that could speak on the subject with more authority?'

He received my suggestion with a smile, but made no reply. He seems, indeed, to content himself with the glory of being handed down to posterity as the Crœsus of languages, without leaving to them the slightest permanent fruit of his immense treasures of science."†

Among these less commonly cultivated languages, I may also class Maltese. In this Mezzofanti was equally at home. As Maltese can scarcely be said to possess anything like a literature,‡ it may be presumed that he acquired it chiefly by oral instruction, partly from occasional visitors to Rome, partly from some Maltese servants who were in the Propaganda at the time of his arrival. This much at least is certain, that, in the year 1840, he spoke the language freely and familiarly. Father Andrew Schembri, of La Valetta, during a residence in Rome in that year, having conducted the preparatory spiritual exercises for a number of youths to whom the Cardinal ad-

* The idea which Mezzofanti throws out here as to the seeming national unconsciousness of the metrical capabilities of the Magyar language is very curiously developed by Mr. Watts, in a paper recently read before the Philological Society. Transactions of Phil. Society, 1855, pp. 285-310.

† Steger's Ergänzungs-Conversations-Lexicon. Vol. IX., pp. 395-7. The work which is intended as a supplement to the existing Encyclopædias, is a repertory of interesting and novel information.

‡ The only Maltese books in the Mezzofanti catalogue are the New Testament; Panzavecchia's Grammatica della Lingua Maltese, Malta, 1845, and Vassalli's Lexicon.

ministered the first communion in the church of San Vito, met his Eminence at breakfast in the convent attached to this church. No sooner was Father Schembri presented to him as a Maltese, than he entered into conversation with him in his own language.* Another Maltese ecclesiastic, Canon Falzou of the cathedral, met the Cardinal in Rome at a later date, in 1845-6. In the course of his sojourn he "had frequent opportunities, for a period of eleven months, of conversing with him in Maltese, which he spoke very well."†

I need scarcely observe that, although in the capital and the principal towns of Malta, the prevailing language is Italian, the dialect spoken by the rural population contains a large admixture of foreign elements, chiefly Arabic and Greek. To what a degree the former language enters into the composition of Maltese, may be inferred from the well-known literary imposture of Vella, who attempted to pass off a forgery of his own as an Arabic history of Sicily under the Arabs.‡

Before closing this chapter, I shall add a short note of the Count de Lavradio, Portuguese ambassador in London, and brother of the Marquis de Lavradio, who for many years held the same office in Rome. It regards Mezzofanti's acquaintance with Portuguese, another language which very few foreigners take the trouble to acquire.

* Letter dated February 18, 1857.

† Letter dated February 20, 1857.

‡ See Biographie Universelle, art. *Vella*. Also Adelung's Mithridates, I. 416.

"I have always heard," writes his excellency, "both from my brother and from other learned Portuguese who knew Cardinal Mezzofanti, that he was perfectly conversant with the Portuguese language, and that he spoke it with facility and with elegance. I myself have read letters written by him in excellent Portuguese; particularly one very remarkable one, addressed by him to the learned M. de Souza, for the purpose of conveying his thanks for the offer which M. de Souza had made to him, of a copy of the magnificent edition of Camoens, which he had published in 1817."

The Marquis de Lavradio here referred to, while ambassador at Rome, expressed the same opinion to Cardinal Wiseman. The Marquis, in Mezzofanti's Portuguese, was particularly struck by the precision of his language and the completeness of his mastery over even the delicate forms of conversational phraseology. He instanced in particular one of his letters. It was perfect, he said, not only in vocabulary but in form, even down to the minutest phrases of conventional compliment and formal courtesy.

CHAPTER XII.

[1834-1836.]

I RESUME the narrative.

The Librarian of the Vatican, or as he is more properly called the "Librarian of the Roman Church," (*Bibliotecario della Chiesa Romana,*) is always a Cardinal, commonly the Cardinal Secretary of State. His duties as such, however, are in great measure nominal; and the details of the management practically rest with the *Primo Custode*, or chief keeper of the Library, who is assisted by a second keeper, and seven *scrittori*, or secretaries, among whom are distributed the seven departments,—Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Italian, and modern foreign languages—into which the books are classified.

The Cardinal Librarian at the time of Mezzofanti's appointment was Cardinal Della Somaglia, who had been Secretary of State under the Popes Leo XII. and Pius VIII.; and who, although, owing to his great age, he had retired from the more active office of Secretary, still retained that of Librarian of the Vatican. Mezzofanti's colleague as *Secondo Custode*, was Monsignor Andrea Molza, an orientalist of high

reputation, and Professor of Hebrew in the Roman University.

Attached to the Basilica of St. Peter's, and subject to the chapter of that church, is a college for the education of ecclesiastics, (popularly called *Pietrini*,) whose striking and picturesque costume seldom fails to attract the notice of strangers. The Rector of this college is always a member of the chapter, and is elected by the canons themselves from among their number. Immediately upon his nomination by the Pope as member of the chapter, Mezzofanti was appointed by his brother canons to the office of Rector of this college, which he continued to hold till his elevation to the Cardinalate. The office is in great part honorary; and Mezzofanti, in addition to his gratuitous services, devoted a considerable part of his income from other sources to the improvement of the establishment, and especially to the support of many meritorious students, whose limited means would have excluded them from its advantages but for his disinterested generosity.

He was also named Consulter of the Sacred Congregation for the correction of oriental books, and a censor of the academy.

It need hardly be said that, from the moment of his arrival in Rome, he had been received with warm and ready welcome in every scientific and literary circle. With Monsignor Mai, both during his residence at the Vatican and after his removal to the Propaganda, he was on terms of most friendly intercourse, and the confidant of many of his literary undertakings. The most distinguished professors of the several schools

of Rome, Graziosi, Fornari, Modena, De Vico, Perrone, Palma, Manera, De Luca, vied with each other in doing him honour. He was elected into all the leading literary societies and academies of the city; and soon after his appointment as Vatican Librarian, he read in the "Academy of the Catholic Religion," a paper which attracted much notice at the time: "On the Services of the Church in promoting the Diffusion of True Knowledge, and the Development of the Human Mind."

The Pope, Gregory XVI., himself, a great lover of oriental studies, received him into his most cordial intimacy. In the one brief hour of recreation which this great and zealous pontiff, who retained even in the Vatican the spirit and the observances of the cloister, allowed himself after dinner, Mezzofanti was his frequent companion. The privilege of entrée was open to him at all times; but it was specially understood that at this more private and informal hour, when the Pope loved to see his most cherished friends around him, Mezzofanti should present himself at least once every week.

In like manner his early friend, Giustiniani, also an accomplished oriental scholar, lost no time, on Mezzofanti's coming to Rome, in resuming with him the intimate friendship which they had contracted during his Eminence's residence at Bologna, as Cardinal Legate. Mezzofanti used to spend every Wednesday evening with Cardinal Giustiniani; and on one occasion, when Dr. Wiseman called at the Cardinal's, he found them reading Arabic together. He met with equal kindness from the Cardinal Secretary, Bernetti, and from Cardinal Albani, who had

both known him at Bologna. The venerable old Cardinal Pacca, too, took especial delight in his company. He was a constant guest at the literary assemblies in the palace of Cardinal Zurla, known to general readers as the historian of Marco Polo and the early Venetian travellers.* On Pentecost Sunday, 1834, the anniversary of the Feast of Tongues, the Cardinal gave a dinner in honour of the great Polyglot, at which many foreigners (one of whom was the present Cardinal Wiseman) speaking a great variety of languages, and all the most distinguished linguists of Rome, were present. Each of the guests carried away a feeling of wonder, almost as though his own language had been the only subject of Mezzofanti's extraordinary display. Signor Drach, the learned Jew, named in a former page,† declared that he had not thought it possible for any but a born Hebrew to speak both Scriptural and Rabbinical Hebrew with the fluency and correctness which Mezzofanti was able to command. A Polish priest named Ozarowski,‡ who sat next to Mezzofanti, assured the late Dr. Cox, of Southampton, that, had he not known Mezzofanti personally, he would, from his conversation, have believed him to be a highly educated Pole; and he added that, "foreigner as this great

* Di Marco Polo, e degli altri Viaggiatori Veneziani, 2 vols., 4to, Venice, 1818.

† Signor Drach is the author of an erudite Essay, "Du Divorce dans la Synagogue," and of several interesting dissertations on the Talmud.

‡ One of the victims in 1840, of the tyrannical church policy of the late Czar in Poland and Polish Russia—He was exiled to Siberia.

linguist was, his familiarity with Polish literature and history completely threw his own into the shade." Nor was this extraordinary faculty confined to the literature and language alone. A Polish lady was so astonished, not only at his knowledge of the language, but at his "acquaintance with the country, and even with individuals, (for many of whom he inquired by name, describing where they lived, what was their occupation, &c.,") that, as she assured Cardinal Wiseman, she "could not believe that he had not resided, or at least travelled, in Poland."

The exact number of languages to which this extraordinary facility extended, had long been a matter of speculation. Mezzofanti himself—averse to everything that bore the appearance of display—although repeatedly questioned on the subject, generally evaded the inquiry, or passed it off with a jesting answer. It is probable too, that he was deterred from any enumeration by the difficulty of distinguishing between languages properly so-called, and dialects. The first distinct statement of his own, bearing directly upon the point, which I have been able to trace on good authority to himself, was made soon after his appointment as Vatican Librarian, in an interview with a gentleman of Italian family, long resident in England, who was introduced to him by Dr. Cox, at that time vice-rector of the English College. The particulars of the interview were communicated to me by Dr. Cox himself, in a letter which I received from him a very short time before his death. The gentleman referred to was Count Mazzinghi, the well

known composer, who, if not born in England, had resided in London for so long a time, that in language, habits, and associations, he was a thorough Englishman.

"On one occasion," says Dr. Cox, "when going to the Vatican Library to visit Mezzofanti, I took with me an English family, who were most desirous of being introduced to him. Mezzofanti remonstrated good-humouredly with me for bringing people to see him, as if he were worthy of being visited, but he received our party with his habitual politeness.

The gentleman whom I introduced, begged as a favour that he would tell him how many languages he could speak. 'I have heard many different accounts,' he said, 'but will you tell me yourself?'

After some hesitation, Mezzofanti answered, 'Well! if you must know, I speak forty-five languages.'

'Forty-five!' replied my friend. 'How, sir, have you possibly contrived to acquire so many?'

'I cannot explain it,' said Mezzofanti. 'Of course God has given me this peculiar power: but if you wish to know how I preserve these languages, I can only say, that, when once I hear the meaning of a wordin any language, I never forget it.'

He then begged us to excuse him, and called one of the librarians to show us the principal curiosities of the library On our return, we found him seated with a young German artist, who, he told us, was going to Constantinople. 'I am teaching him Turkish before he goes,' he continued, 'and as he speaks modern Greek very well, I use that language as the means of my instruction. I had the honour,' he subjoined, 'of giving some lessons on modern Greek to your poet, Lord Byron, when he was in Bologna.'

"I should add," said Dr. Cox "that I frequently heard him speak of Byron, and that his criticisms upon his works, and his reflections on the peculiar characteristics of his poetry, would have been worthy of a place in a Review."

While he thus professed, however, to speak forty-

five languages, he took care, as in his similar conversation with Dr. Tholuck, to convey that his knowledge of some of them was much less perfect than of others.

Nor did it remain stationary at this limit. Its progress, even while he resided at Bologna, had been steady, and tolerably uniform. But the increased facilities for the study which he enjoyed in Rome, enabled him to add more rapidly to his store. Cardinal Wiseman assures me, that, before he left Rome, Mezzofanti's reply to the inquiry as to the number of his languages, was that which has since become a sort of proverb, "Fifty, and Bolognese." Even as early as 1837, Mezzofanti himself, in his extempore reply to Dr. Wap's Dutch verses, as we have seen, used words to the same effect :—

Mijne tong verbleef med *vijftig taalen* stom.

I have been anxious to obtain, on this interesting point, an authentic report from persons who enjoyed almost daily opportunities of intercourse with Mezzofanti at this period, for the purpose of testing more satisfactorily, the accuracy of a contemporary sketch of him, which appeared in a work of considerable pretensions, published in Germany, in 1837—Fleck's "Scientific Tour,"—which describes him, from popular report, as speaking "some thirty languages and dialects, but of course, not all with equal readiness." As M. Fleck is in many things, an echo of the supercilious criticisms of those who, while they admitted in general terms the marvellous character of Mezzofanti's talent, contrived, nevertheless, to depreciate

it in detail, it may be well to afford the reader an opportunity of judging it for himself.*

"Of middle size and somewhat stooping in his gait," writes M. Fleck, "Mezzofanti's appearance is nevertheless agreeable and benevolent. Since he has been Prefect of the Vatican in Mai's stead, I have had occasion to see him daily. His talent is that of a linguist, not that of a philologist. One forenoon in the Vatican, he spoke modern Greek to a young man who came in, Hebrew with a rabbi or 'scrittore' of the library, Russian with a magnate who passed through to the manuscript rooms, Latin and German with me, Danish with a young Danish archæologist who was present, English with the English,—Italian with many. German he speaks well, but almost too softly, like a Hamburgher; Latin he does not speak particularly well, and his English is just as middling. There is something about him that reminds me of a parrot—he does not seem to abound in ideas; but his talent is the more deserving of admiration, that the Italians have great difficulties to cope with in learning a foreign language. He will always remain a wonderful phenomenon, if not a miracle in the dogmatic sense. It is said to have been observed, that he often repeats the same ideas in conversation. He was entirely dependant on Mai in his position in the Vatican, especially at the commencement of his tenure of office, and manifested some weakness in this respect. He told me he had learned Russian at Bologna from a Pole, and so had been in danger of introducing Polonicisms into his Russian. In the French wars, his visits to the hospitals gave him an excellent opportunity of seeing and conversing with men of different nations, and the march of the Austrians made him acquainted with the dialect of the gipsies. Thrice, he told me, he has been dangerously ill, and in a kind of 'confusion of languages.' He is altogether a man of a sensitive nervous system, and much more decidedly and more pusillanimously attached to Catholicism than Mai. He has never travelled, except to Rome and Naples; and to

* I have used the translation published in Mr. Watts's paper, restoring, however, a few sentences which were there omitted.

Naples he went to study Chinese at the institute for the education of natives of China as missionaries, and there he fell dangerously ill. He seeks the society of foreigners very eagerly, in order to converse with every one in his own language. As a special favourite of the Pope, he enlivens his holiness's after-dinner hours (Verdaungs-stunden), and is often invited to him in the afternoon: by his manifold acquirements and the winning urbanity of his manners, he seems as if born for the society of a court. He has made himself popular among the learned foreigners who visit the Vatican, by permitting them to continue their labours in the library during certain days after the beginning of the holidays, on which the library had ordinarily been closed with a view to the adjustment and supervision of the MSS. His predilection for acquiring foreign idioms is so strong that he observes and imitates the provincial dialects and accents. He has carried this so far, that, for example, he can distinguish the Hamburgh and Hanoverian German very well. Even of Wendish he is not ignorant. This is, indeed, a gift of no very high order; but it is a gift nevertheless, and, when exercised in its more dazzling points of practice, sets one in amazement. Mezzofanti understands this well. The Italians admire this distinguished and unassuming man, as the eighth wonder of the world, and believe his reputation to be not only European, but Asiatic and African also. He is said to speak some thirty languages and dialects; but of course not all with equal readiness. The Persian missionary, Sebastiani, who, in Napoleon's time, played an important political part in Persia, was eagerly sought after by Mezzofanti when in Rome, that he might learn modern Persian from him; Sebastiani, however, showed himself disinclined to his society, which pained Mezzofanti much. Mezzofanti has been called the modern Mithridates, and thought very highly of altogether. In an intellectual point of view, many learned men, even Italians, are certainly above him: his reading appears at times shallow, owing to its having been so scattered, and it has occurred that he has often repeated the same thing to strangers; but his great and peculiar linguistic talent, which seems as it were to spring from some innate sense, cannot be denied; his good nature and politeness to

the students who frequent the Vatican are very great; and I am therefore unable to comprehend how Blume (Iter Italicum, I. 153,) can speak of the opposite experience of learned travellers during his residence at Bologna.

Mezzofanti is fond of perpetuating his memory in the albums of his friends. He wrote in mine:—

"Ἔρχεται ἀνθρώποις λαθραίως ἔσχατον ἦμαρ,
Οἱ δὲ περὶ ζωῆς πολλὰ μονοῦσι μάτην.
Χρίστε, σὺ μὲν πάντων ἀρχή, σὺ δὲ καί τέλος ἐσσί;
Ἔν τε σοι εἰρήνη ἐστὶ καὶ ἡσυχίη."*

I shall leave the greater part of these strictures, from their very generality, to be judged by the facts and statements actually recorded in these pages; merely observing that on all questions which involve the depth and accuracy of Mezzofanti's knowledge of particular subjects, those only are entitled to speak with authority, who, like Bucheron, Libri, and others elsewhere referred to, took the trouble to test it by actual inquiry. It will be enough to say that, wherever M. Fleck has ventured into details, his criticisms are palpably unjust.

For instance, even at Rome, with all its proverbial fastidiousness, the singular beauty of Mezzofanti's Latin conversation which Fleck describes as "not particularly good," was freely and universally admitted; and Bucheron, the Piedmontese professor who came to Bologna prepossessed with the idea that Mezzofanti's Latin scholarship was meagre and superficial, was obliged to confess, after a long and searching conversation, that his acquaintance with the Latin language and literature was as exact as it was comprehensive.

* Fleck's Wissenschaftliche Reise, I. p.p. 93—5.

In like manner M. Fleck takes upon him to pronounce that Mezzofanti's English was "just as middling" as his Latin. Now I need hardly recall the testimonies of Mr. Harford, Stewart Rose, Byron, Lady Morgan, Lady Blessington, and every other English traveller who conversed with him, as completely refuting this depreciatory estimate. The truth is, that most of the English and Irish visitors with whom I have spoken, have agreed with me in considering that, in his manner of speaking English, the absence of all foreign peculiarities was so complete as to render it difficult, in a short conversation, to detect that he was a foreigner. "One day," Cardinal Wiseman relates, "Mezzofanti then a prelate, visited me, and shortly after an Irish gentleman called who had arrived that moment in Rome. I was called out, and left them together for some time. On my returning, Mezzofanti took leave. I asked the other who he thought that gentleman was. He replied, looking surprised at the question, '*An English Priest*, I suppose.'"

On another occasion, about the same period, the late Dr. Baines, Vicar Apostolic of the Western district, having been present at one of the polyglot exhibitions in the Propaganda, and having there witnessed the extraordinary versatility of Mezzofanti's powers, returned with him after the exhibition. "We dined together," said Dr. Baines, "and I entreated him, having been in the tower of Babel all the morning, to let us stick to English for the rest of the day. Accordingly, we did stick to English, which he spoke

as fluently as we do, and with the same accuracy, not only of grammar but of idiom. His only trip was in saying, 'That was before the time when I remember,' instead of 'before my time.' Once, too, I thought him mistaken in the pronunciation of a word. But when I returned to England, I found that my way was either provincial or old-fashioned, and that I was wrong and he was right."*

Nor was this fluency in speaking English confined to the ordinary topics of conversation, or to the more common-place words of the language. His vocabulary was as extensive and as various as it was select. A curious example of this, not only as regards English but also in reference to German, was told to me by Cardinal Wiseman.

One broiling day he and Mr. Monckton Milnes were walking in company with Mezzofanti across the scorching pavement of the Piazza SS. Apostoli. They were speaking German at the time.

"Well!" said Mr. Milnes, utterly overcome by the heat and glare, "this is what you may call a—what is the German," he added, turning to Dr. Wiseman, "for '*sweltering ?*'"

"'*Schwülig*,' of course," suggested Mezzofanti, without a moment's pause!

I have heard several similar anecdotes illustrating the minuteness of his acquaintance with other languages; and when it is remembered, that his stock of words was in great measure drawn from books, and those generally the classics of their respective languages, it

* Miss Mitford's Recollections of a Literary Life, II. p. 203.

need hardly be considered matter of surprise, that, as, in English, Lady Morgan found "his turn of phrase and peculiar selection of words to be those of the "Spectator," so other foreigners have been struck by finding an Italian model his conversational style upon the highest and most refined standards in their respective literatures. One instance may suffice as a specimen. Professor Carlson of the university of Upsala, who was for a considerable time engaged in the Vatican Library, in examining the papers of Queen Christina, and was thus thrown for weeks into constant communication with Mezzofanti, assured my friend Mr. Wackerbarth of the same university, that Mezzofanti spoke the language perfectly—"quite like a native;" and that not only as regards the words, but also as regards the accent and rhythm of the language, which is very difficult. The Swedish and Danish languages are very much alike, though differing widely in accent and musical character. The Professor declared, that Mezzofanti was perfectly at home in both, as well as regards their affinities as their differences. He added, that if there were any fault to find with Mezzofanti's speaking of Swedish, it was *perhaps a trifle too grammatically accurate:* if that can be considered as a fault. This may perhaps be better understood when explained, that in Swedish the difference between the spoken and written language, is perhaps more than in most languages, many words being inflected in the written, but not in the spoken language. Thus the verb "kan," (can,) is in the plural, "kanna;" but in conversation the plural is

"kan," the same as the singular. Now, from the anecdote already told regarding young Uttini,* it appears that Mezzofanti was almost entirely self-taught in Swedish; and I infer from the catalogue of his library that his course of Swedish reading lay exclusively among the purest classics of that language. I am informed by Mr. Wackerbarth, that Count Oxenstjerna, son of the classical Swedish translator of Milton and Dante, who conversed with him at Rome, found him thoroughly familiar with his father's works,† and in general critically acquainted with all the masters of Swedish style.

Indeed there is hardly any circumstance connected with this extraordinary gift more calculated to excite wonder than the extent and accuracy of his acquaintance with the various literatures of the languages to which he had applied himself. The fact is attested by so many witnesses that it is impossible to doubt it. Numerous instances have been already cited; but I cannot pass from this period of his life without adding a few others, chiefly regarding oriental languages, taken almost at random from many independent testimonies which have been communicated to me by persons who enjoyed his intimacy during the early years of his residence at Rome.

In a commission for the revision of the liturgical

* See Supra, pp. 143-4.

† The Catalogue (p. 33,) contains the complete edition, 5 vols., 8vo., Stockholm, 1826; also the works of Kellgren, Leopold, and others. It also comprises the Frithiofs-Saga, and other early Scandinavian remains.

books of the Armenian rite appointed by Pope Gregory XVI., he was associated with a native Armenian scholar, Father Arsenius Angiarakian, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Gregory the Illuminator. This learned ecclesiastic, in a letter dated August 15, 1855, assures me that during the frequent opportunities of observation which a literary inquiry of such exceeding delicacy afforded, he was astonished *(ho dovuto stupire)* at the profound knowledge of the ancient language of Armenia, exhibited by his associate. He adds that Mezzofanti "spoke the vulgar Armenian with perfect freedom, and in all its dialects." Mgr Hurmuz, the Armenian Archbishop of Sirace, in a letter of May 24th, in the same year, attests that Mezzofanti's Armenian scholarship "was not confined to the knowledge of the language, ancient and modern; he also knew the history of the Armenian nation, and of science and art among them, together with their periods of progress and decay."

Father Arsenius frequently introduced oriental visitors, especially Turks and Persians, to Mezzofanti. Ahmed Fethi Pasha, with his Secretary, Sami Effendi, was presented to him on his way to London in 1836. After a long interview he declared to Father Arsenius, that "Mezzofanti was not only perfectly at home in the vocabulary, the structure, and the pronunciation, both of Turkish and of Persian, but thoroughly and profoundly versed *(possedeva per eccellenza)* in both literatures—being master of the great classic prose writers and poets of both, and their literary history." He received the same assurances as to

both languages, at various times, from Redschid Pasha, Ali Pasha, Fuad Effendi, and Shekib Effendi.

A native Syrian whom M. Antoine d'Abbadie met in Rome in 1839, assured him that "Mezzofanti's knowledge of Arabic and fluency in speaking it were both equally admirable."*

Speaking of the literature of Greece, Monsignor Missir, the learned Greek Archbishop of Irenopolis who has for many years resided at Rome, declares (in a letter of May 21st, 1855,) his belief that "Mezzofanti was as fully master of the ancient Greek, as he was of Latin or Italian, and that there was scarce a Greek author, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, whom he had not read." The abate Pietro Matranga,† a Greek of Sicily, and professor of Greek in the Greek College of St. Athanasius, confirms this impression to a great extent. He states (August 17th, 1855) that "in examining the students of the Greek College, (as was his custom for many years) in the classical authors, both the orators and the tragedians, Mezzofanti never had occasion to take a book into his hands; being able on the passage being indicated by the professor, to repeat it from memory."

A Polish priest named Ozarowski, stated as much for Polish literature to Dr. Cox.

Nay, even in such an out-of-the-way literature as

* Letter of M. D'Abbadie, May 6, 1855.

† The Abate Matranga is often mentioned with high praise by Cardinal Mai in his prefaces. He is favourably known to Greek scholars besides by his *Anecdota Græca*, 2 vols. 8vo., Rome, 1850, consisting of the *Allegoriæ Homericæ* of Tzetzes, and many other remains of ancient scholiast commentators upon Homer, and of some unpublished Anacreontic poems of the Byzantine period.

that of Sicily, the same abate Matranga assures me that he was equally versed. "He delighted," says the abate, "in repeating from memory the poetry of the Sicilian poet, Giovanni Meli,"* a writer who although of the highest fame among his countrymen, is hardly known even by name outside of his native island.

I cannot close, however, without saying that I have not found any evidence of his having being equally familiar with another exceedingly important literature of the East—the ancient Syriac. Vague statements I have heard in abundance; but no one to whom I have had access could speak with certainty; and Signor Matteo Schiahuan, professor of that language in the Propaganda, considered him but moderately versed therein, *(una mediocre cognizione.)* This will appear the more difficult of explanation, as the Syriac department of his catalogue is tolerably extensive, and is abundantly supplied with at least the elementary books of that language.

* Moore (Diary, III. p. 183,) mentions him as "the Abate Meli, a Sicilian poet, of whom he had never heard before." He is, nevertheless, a voluminous writer of pastorals, sonnets, ballads, and odes, sacred and profane. His largest poem, however, is an epic of twelve cantos on the History of Don Quixote, in *ottava rima*. After a little trouble it may be read without much difficulty by any one acquainted with the ordinary Italian, and is highly amusing. Meli's works are collected into one vol. royal 8vo., Palermo, 1846.

CHAPTER XIII.

[1836-1838.]

ONE evening about this time, Dr. Wiseman, meeting Mezzofanti in the Piazza di Spagna, inquired where he was going.

"To the Propaganda," he replied; "I have to give a lesson there."

"In what language ?" asked Dr. Wiseman.

"In Californian," said Mezzofanti. "I am teaching it to the Californian youths whom we have there."

"Californian !" exclaimed his friend, "From whom can you possibly have learned that out-of-the-way tongue ?"

"*From themselves*," replied Mezzofanti : "and now I am teaching it to them grammatically."

This interesting anecdote illustrates another curious phase of Mezzofanti's marvellous faculty—the manner in which he dealt with a language, not only new to himself, but entirely unwritten, unsystematized, and, in a word, destitute of all the ordinary aids and appliances of study.

Two native Californians, children of one of the many Indian tribes of that peninsula, were sent to Rome to be educated at the Propaganda. One of these died not very long after his arrival ; the other, whose native name was Tac, and who exhibited much more talent than his companion, lived in the Propaganda for about three years, but eventually sunk under the effects of the Roman climate, and perhaps, of the confinement and unwonted habits of collegiat elife. To these youths, from the day of their arrival, Mezzofanti attached himself with all the interest which a new language always possessed for him.

The Indians of the Californian peninsula are broken up into several independent tribes, the principal of which are three in number, the Picos, the Waicuros, and the Laymones. Their languages are as various as their subdivisions of race. In the days of the Spanish missionaries, there could hardly be found any two or three missions in which the same dialect was spoken ;† insomuch that the fathers of these missions have never succeeded in doing for the native language, what they have done for most of the other languages of Northern and Central America—reducing it to an intelligible grammatical system.‡ Upon Mezzofanti, therefore, in his intercourse with these youths, devolved all the trouble of discovering the grammatical structure of the Californian language, and of reducing it to rules. It was a most curious process. He began by making his pupils recite the

* See account in *Civiltà Cattolica* (by F. Bresciani), vii., p. 569.

† See Adelung's *Mithridates*, vol. iii, part iii, p. 186.

‡ Ibid, p. 187.

Lord's Prayer, until he picked up first the general meaning, and afterwards the particular sounds, and what may be called the rhythm of the language. The next step was to ascertain and to classify the particles, both affixes and suffixes; to distinguish verbs from nouns, and substantives from adjectives; to discover the principal inflexions of both. Having once mastered the preliminaries, his power of generalising seemed rather to be an instinct than an exercise of the reasoning faculty. With him the knowledge of words led, almost without an effort, to the power of speaking.

I have been assured by the Rev. James Doyle, who was a student of the Propaganda at the time, and who had frequent opportunities of witnessing Mezzofanti's conversation with these youths, that his success was complete, at least so far as could be judged from external appearance—from his fluency, his facility of speech, and all the other outward indications of familiarity.* Some time before the arrival of these Californians, and soon after Mezzofanti's coming to Rome, Bishop Fenwick, of Cincinnati, had

* Since the above was written, a case somewhat similar has been mentioned to me by the Rev Dr. Murray of Dublin, also a student of the Propaganda. A young Mulatto of the Dutch West Indian Island of Curaçoa, named Enrico Gomez, arrived about a fortnight before Epiphany, 1845. He spoke no language except the "Nigger Dutch," of his native island. Mezzofanti took him into his hands, and before the day of Academy (the Sunday after Epiphany) he had not only established a mode of communication with him, but had learned his language, and even composed for him a short poetical piece, which Gomez recited at the Academy! A third case, of three Albanian youths, is mentioned in the Civiltà Cattolica, VII. p. 571.

sent for education to the Propaganda two North American Indians, youths of the Ottawa tribe, then residing near Mackinaw, at the upper end of Lake Michegan. The elder of these, named Augustine Hamelin, was a half-breed, being the son of a French father; the younger, whose Indian name was *Maccodobenesi*,("the Blackbird,") was of pure Ottawa blood.* Unhappily, as almost invariably happens in similar circumstances, the Indian, although a youth of much promise and very remarkable piety, pined away in the College, and eventually died from the bursting of a blood-vessel. Augustin Hamelin, the elder, spent a considerable time in the Propaganda, where he studied with great success, but in the end, being seized with blood-spitting, the authorities of the College, apprehensive of a recurrence of the same disease which had befallen Maccodobenesi, judged it more prudent to send him back to America. In consequence, he rejoined his tribe in the year 1835, or 1836. Mrs. Jameson, who in her "Rambles among the Red Men," speaks of the Roman Catholic Ottawa converts in general, as "in appearance, dress, intelligence, industry, and general civilization, superior to the converts of all other communions,"† refers in particular to "a well-looking young man, dressed in European fashion and in black, of mixed blood, French and Indian, who had been sent, when young, to be educated at the Propaganda, and was lately come to

* These youths are mentioned in "Shea's Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes." (p. 387.) a work of exceeding interest and most carefully executed.

settle as a teacher and interpreter among his people."* This youth, there can be no doubt, was Hamelin. Having come soon afterwards to Washington, as one of a deputation from his tribe to negociate a treaty with the United States Government, he produced a great sensation by his high education, his great general knowledge, and especially his skill in languages; and on a subsequent occasion, in 1840, Bishop O'Connor, of Pittsburgh, who had known him in the Propaganda, and to whom I am indebted for these particulars regarding him, encountered him in Philadelphia, engaged in a similar mission to the American Government.

The well-known Indian philologer, M. du Ponceau, met him about the same time, and speaks with much praise of his intelligence and ability. It was from Hamelin that M. du Ponceau obtained the information regarding the Ottawa language which he has used in the comparative vocabulary of Indian languages, appended to his *Memoire sur le Systeme Grammaticale des Langues Indiennes*.†

Whether Mezzofanti learned the Ottawa dialect from these youths I have not positively ascertained. Indeed it is difficult to say at what precise time he first directed his attention to the Indian languages of North America. He certainly knew something of them before he left Bologna. He read for M. Libri, in 1830, a book in one of the Indian languages. Prince Lewis Lucian Bonaparte too, in a communication with

* Sketches in Canada, p. 214—15.

† See his Memoire sur le Systeme Grammaticale, p. 97, also p. 306, and in the appendix *passim*.

which he has honoured me, mentions a conversation with him at Bologna, in which he spoke of these Indian languages, and alluded to one in particular in which the letter *B* is wanting; "not," as he explained to the Prince, "on account of any peculiarity in the genius of the language which excludes this sound, but because the Indians of this tribe wear a heavy ornament suspended by a ring from the under lip, which by dragging the under lip downwards, and thus preventing its contact with the upper, renders it impossible for them to produce the sound of *B* or any other labial." It is probable therefore, that even before he first met Hamelin and his companion, Mezzofanti had already learnt something of these Indian languages; and as, in his conversation with Dr. Kip, some years later, the only languages which he mentioned as known to him are the Chippewa, the Delaware, and the Algonquin, it is most likely that it was the first of these—a variety of which is spoken by the Ottawas—that formed his medium of conversation with these youths. On this point, Dr. O'Connor is unable to speak from his own knowledge.

The Indian language which he knew best, however, was the Algonquin, the parent of a large progeny of dialects; and this he learnt not from the natives, but from Father Thavenet, of the congregation of St. Sulpice, for many years a missionary among that tribe, and perhaps more profoundly skilled in their language* than any European scholar before his time. Of the Algonquin Mezzofanti became

* See Du Ponceau, Memoire, p. 294—5.

completely master—a success which can only be appreciated by those who understand the peculiar, and to a European entirely novel structure of these languages.

But whatever uncertainty may exist as to the manner in which he acquired these particular languages, there are many others with regard to which it cannot be doubted that he turned most industriously to account, during these years, the many resources supplied by the Propaganda, and that to this noble institution he was indebted for many of his later acquisitions.

It may perhaps be remembered, that, when Dr. Tholuck saw him in 1830, and changed quite suddenly to Arabic in the midst of a conversation in German, although he replied in that language "without hesitation and quite correctly," yet he "spoke very slowly, and, as it were, composing the words one with another." Now Dr. O'Connor informs me, that, from the day of his first coming to the Propaganda, he "fastened upon" an Egyptian student named Sciahuan, with whom he conversed continually in Arabic; and that

* Not only are the inflexions entirely different from those of the languages to which we are accustomed, but the very use of inflexions is altogether peculiar. For example, in the Chippewa language there is an inflexion of nouns, similar to our conjugation of verbs, by which all the states of the noun are expressed. Thus the word *man* can be inflected for person, to signify, '*I am* a man,' '*thou art* a man,' '*he is* a man;' &c. So also the inflexions of the verb transitive vary according to the gender of the object—See Mrs. Jameson, p. 196. Schoolcraft ascribes the same character to the entire Algonquin family—See Du Ponceau, pp. 130—5.

he also undertook (thus enjoying an opportunity of practice in two languages at once,) to instruct in it a young Maltese, likewise a student of the college. With what success this twofold practice was attended may be inferred from the fact, already recorded, that, a few years later, when M. d'Abbadie was in Rome (in 1839,) he was told by a native Syrian that Mezzofanti's fluency, as well as his knowledge of Arabic, were both admirable.*

Another language which Mezzofanti, in 1839, told Dr. Tholuck he had studied, but in which Dr. Tholuck had no means of trying him, was the Albanese. Don Pietro Matranga mentioned† that he also spoke this language with some Albanian students who were in the Propaganda, soon after his arrival in Rome: but that, as they were from upper Albania, and spoke a corrupt half Turkish dialect of Albanese, he conversed but rarely with them. I may add, however, that Signor Agostino Ricci who came to the Propaganda in 1846, assured me, in a note written two years since,‡ that, between 1846, and the Cardinal's death in 1849, he had "repeatedly conversed with him in Albanese, and that he spoke it very well." *(assai bene.)*

For Armenian, Turkish, and Greek, the Propaganda also supplied abundant resources. The students, Hassun and Musabini—the first, it will be recollected, whom Mezzofanti chanced to meet at his earliest visit—ever afterwards continued his especial favourites and friends. With the former he always spoke in Tur-

* Letter of M. d'Abbadie, dated May 4, 1855.

† I have just heard with much regret that this learned and excellent ecclesiastic died last year.

‡ Letter of May 23rd, 1855.

kish, with the latter in Greek. A youth named Tigrani, supplied him with practice in Armenian; but to this language, which he enjoyed other opportunities of cultivating, he seldom devoted much of the time which he spent in the Propaganda. It was the same for most of the European languages which he constantly met outside. In the college, for the most part, he confined himself to those which he had no means of cultivating elsewhere.

Without wearying the reader, however, with further details, I shall transcribe (although it regards a later period,) an interesting letter received from the Rev. Charles Fernando, the missionary apostolic at the Point of Galle in Ceylon, which enters briefly, but yet very fully and distinctly, into the particulars of the languages which Mezzofanti used to speak in the Propaganda, during the writer's residence there as a student. M. Fernando is a native of Colombo in the Island of Ceylon. He came to Rome early in the year 1843, and remained until after the death of Cardinal Mezzofanti.

"When I left Ceylon for Rome," he writes, August 29, 1855, "I knew but very little of the Cingalese language; a very small vocabulary of domestic words, and a facility in reading in Cingalese characters, without understanding the written language, was the full stock of my knowledge when I reached the college of the Propaganda. From such a master you might be disposed to augur badly of the scholar. Still it was not so.

A few days after my arrival in college, I was introduced to his Eminence in his polyglot library and study room in the college itself. Cardinal Mezzofanti knew nothing of the Cingalese

before I went to the Propaganda, yet in a few days he was able to assist me to put together a short plain discourse for our academical exhibition of the Epiphany.

My own knowledge of the language, nevertheless, was not at that time such as to warrant my saying that he knew the Cingalese, or that he spoke it well. This, however, I can assert confidently, that, after a few conversations with me, (I don't recollect having been with him above a dozen times for the purpose,) he thoroughly entered into the nature and system of the Cingalese language.

Among the other languages of Hindostan, I can only speak as to one. In my time there were no students who spoke the Mahratta, Canarese, or Malayalim; but I heard him speak Hindostani with a student who is now missionary apostolic in Agra, where he was brought up, the Rev. William Keegan.

The most remarkable characteristic of the Cardinal as a linguist was his power of passing from one language to another without the least effort. I recollect having often seen him speak to a whole *Camerata* of the Propaganda students, addressing each in his own language or dialect in rapid succession, and with such ease, fluency, and spirit, and so much of the character and tone of each language that it used to draw a burst of merry laughter from the company; every one delighted to have heard his own language spoken by the amiable Cardinal with its characteristic precision. I may mention the names of many with whom the Cardinal thus conversed; with Moses Ngau (who died in Pegu not long ago) in the Peguan language; with Zaccaria Cohen in Abyssinian; with Gabriel, another Abyssinian, in the Amarina dialect; with Sciata, an Egyptian, in the Coptic; with Hollas in Armenian; with Churi* in Arabic; with Barsciu in Syriac; with Abdo

* The Signor Churi mentioned by M. Fernando is the author of a curious and interesting volume of travels—"The Sea Nile, the Desert and Nigritia," published in 1853. Being obliged by ill health to leave the Propaganda, and unwilling for many reasons to return to his native Lebanon, he settled in London as a teacher of oriental languages. One of his pupils in Arabic, Captain Peel, engaged him in 1850, as his interpreter in a tour of Egypt, Syria, and

in Arabico-maltese, (the Maltese speak a mixture of Arabic and Italian); in Tamulic with Pedro Royapen, (of this, however, I am not so sure); with Leang and Mong in Chinese; with Jakopski and Arabagiski in Bulgarian; with Beriscia and Baddovani in Albanian. With regard to Malay, Tibetan, and Mantchu, I cannot bear witness, as there were no students who spoke those dialects in my time. As for the European languages, I can assure you that I heard the Cardinal speak a great variety, Polish, Hungarian,* Rhetian, Swedish, Danish, German, Russian, &c."

The caution with which M. Fernando speaks on the subject of Cingalese, as well as of the rest of the Indian languages, makes his testimony in other respects more valuable, inasmuch as I had frequently heard it said in Rome that the Cardinal spoke "Hindostani and all the dialects of India." It needed, however, but a moment's recollection of the number and variety of these dialects, (several of which till very recently were almost unknown even by name to Europeans,) to assure me that this was a great exaggeration. I am inclined to think that his knowledge of Indian languages lay entirely among those which are derived from the Sanscrit. The notion of Colebrook and the philologers of his time, that all the languages of India are of Sanscrit origin, is now commonly abandoned. It is found that the languages of the Deccan have but little of the Sanscrit element; and Mr. Caldwell, in his recent com-

the Holy Land, and afterwards, in 1851, in an expedition to the interior of Africa, which forms the subject of Signor Churi's volume.

* I have been assured by M. Bauer, a student of the Propaganda in 1855, that he often conversed with the Cardinal in Hungarian, during the years 1847 and 1848.

parative grammar of the South-Indian Languages,* has enumerated under the general designation of Dravidian, nine un-Sanscritic languages of this region of India, among which the best known are the Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, and Malayalim. There seems no reason to believe that Mezzofanti was familiarly acquainted with any one of these four, or indeed with any member of Dravidian family, unless the Guzarattee can be included therein.

M. Fernando's hesitation regarding his knowledge of Tamil, induced me to inquire of Rev. Dr. Mac Auliffe, lately a Missionary at Madras, who, after spending several years in that Presidency, had entered the Propaganda, and who knew the Cardinal at the same time with M. Fernando. Dr. Mac Auliffe informs me, that his eminence did not know Tamil. The Indian languages which he knew, according to Dr. MacAuliffe, were Hindostani and Mahratta; that he was acquainted with at least the first of these there seems no possible doubt, both from M. Fernando's testimony, and from that of Count Lackersteen of Calcutta, a native East Indian gentleman, who assures me† that he conversed with him in Hindostani, in 1843-4. As to the Mahratta dialect, I have not (beyond Dr. MacAuliffe's assurance) been able to obtain any direct information; but Mr. Eyoob, an Armenian merchant of Calcutta, testifies to the Cardinal's acquain-

* A comparative Grammar of the Dravidian, or South-Indian Family of Languages. By the Rev. R. Caldwell, B.A., London, 1856.

† In a letter dated Calcutta, September 20, 1855.

tance with another Indian language—the Guzarattee. Mr. Eyoob saw the Cardinal in the same year with Count Lackersteen, and writes* that, when he was introduced to his eminence as a native of Bombay, the Cardinal at once addressed him in *Guzarattee*. Mr. Eyoob adds, that the Cardinal also spoke with him in Armenian and in Portuguese, in both of which languages his accent, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy, were beyond all exception. Count Lackersteen's letter fully confirms so much of this statement as regards Portuguese. The Count also spoke with Mezzofanti in Persian: but, as he does not profess to be a profound Persian scholar, his testimony on this head is not of so much value.

By far the most remarkable, however, of Mezzofanti's successes in the Propaganda was his acquisition of Chinese. The difficulty of that language for Europeans has long been proverbial,† and it argued no ordinary courage in a scholar now on the verge of his sixtieth year to enter regularly upon such a study. His first progress at Naples, before he was interrupted by the severe illness which there seized him, has been already described. It was not for a considerable time after his return, that he was enabled to resume the attempt systematically. A wish

* Letter dated Calcutta, September 22, 1855.

† See a most amusing account by Père Bourgeois, in the Lettres Edifiantes, of his first Chinese Sermon, which D'Israeli has translated. An interesting exposition of the difficulties of the Chinese language is found in Grüber's Relazione di Cina, Florence, 1697.

was expressed by the authorities of the Propaganda that a select number of the students of the Naples college should be sent to Rome for the completion of their theological studies. Three young Chinese had already visited the Propaganda while Mezzofanti was still in Bologna, one of whom, named Pacifico Yu, offered himself to the Cardinal Prefect, as a missionary to the Corea, at a period when the attempt was almost a certain road to martyrdom : but it was not until the year 1835-6 that the design of adopting a few of the Neapolitan students into the college of the Propaganda was actually carried out. Don Raffaelle Umpierres, for many years Procurator of the mission at Macao, was soon afterwards appointed their prefect and professor ; and under his auspices and with the assistance of the young Chinese, Mezzofanti resumed the study with new energy. His success is admitted on all hands to have been almost unexampled. Certainly it has never been surpassed by any European not resident in China. In the year 1843, I was myself present while he conversed with two youths, named Leang and Mong, and although my evidence cannot extend beyond these external signs, I can at least bear witness to the fluency with which he spoke, and the ease and spirit with which he seemed to sustain the conversation. But his complete success is placed beyond all doubt by an attestation forwarded to me, by the abate Umpierres, the Chinese Professor,* already named, who declares that he "frequently conversed with the Cardinal in Chinese, from the year 1837, up to the date of

* Dated Rome, May 23, 1855.

his death, and that he not only spoke the mandarin Chinese,* but understood other dialects of the language."

Mezzofanti himself freely confessed the exceeding difficulty which he had found in mastering this language. It cost him, as he assured Father Arsenius Angiarakian, four months of uninterrupted study. Speaking once with Cardinal Wiseman of his method of linguistic study, he said that the "ear and not the eye was for him the ordinary medium through which language was conveyed;" and he added, that the true origin of the difficulty which he had felt in learning Chinese, was not so much the novelty of its words and forms, as the fact that, departing from the analogy of other languages, it disconcerted the pre-arranged system on which he had theretofore proceeded; it *has an eye-language distinct from the ear-language*, which he was obliged to make an especial study.

It is worth while to mention that the Cardinal successfully accomplished in a short time what cost the missionaries in China, with all their advantages of position, many years of labour, having actually preached to the Chinese students in the Propaganda, on occasion of one of the spiritual retreats which are periodically observed in ecclesiastical seminaries.

* What Europeans call the Mandarin language is by the Chinese designated Houan—Hoa, or universal language. It is spoken by instructed persons throughout the Empire, although with a marked difference of pronunciation in the northern and the southern provinces. Besides this, there are dialects peculiar to the provinces of Kouang-tong, and Fo-kien, as well as several minor dialects. See Huc's Chinese Empire, I. p. 319—20.

It must not be supposed, however, that, the Propaganda was his only school of languages. Not unfrequently, also, missionaries from various parts of the world, who repaired to the Propaganda on the affairs of their several missions, supplied a sort of supplement to the ordinary resources of the institution. In this way a German missionary, Father Brunner, (now, I believe, superior of a religious congregation in the United States,) initiated him in the languages of Western Africa. Father Brunner had been for a time a missionary in Congo. On his arrival in Rome, Mezzofanti placed himself in communication with him; and Cardinal Reisach, (who was at that time Rector of the Propaganda,) states that he soon progressed so far as to be able to keep up a conversation in the language. The general language of Congo comprises many distinct branches, the Loango, the Kakongo, the Mandongo, the Angolese, and the Camba.* Of these Mezzofanti applied himself especially to the Angolese, in which he more than once composed pieces for recitation at the academical exhibition of the Epiphany. Two of these, which will be found in the appendix, have been submitted to the criticism of Mr. Consul Brande, long a resident at Loango, who pronounces them "to exhibit a correct knowledge of the Angolese or Bunda language."†

* See Adelung, Mithridates, III. part I. pp. 207—24.

† Letter of February 7, 1857. I had submitted these pieces to Dr. Livingston; but as he, having been ill all the time he remained in Angola, had never learned that language, he was good enough to send the papers to Mr. Brande. The latter, besides kindly communicating to me his own opinion regarding them, has taken the trouble to forward them to a friend at Loando, to be submitted to an intelligent native in whose judgment Mr. Brande has full confidence; but as yet (March 15, 1858,) no reply has reached me.

I may add to the number of those with whom he was accustomed to speak oriental languages, two others mentioned to me by Cardinal Wiseman. The first was a learned Chaldean, Paul Alkushi, who had once been a student of the Propaganda, but relinquished the intention of embracing the ecclesiastical profession. The other was a converted Jew, a native of Bagdad, and who, although otherwise illiterate, spoke fluently Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian. He was familiarly known in Rome by the sobriquet of "*Shalom*," from the habitual salutation with which he used to address his friends at meeting and parting.

The only letters of this period which I have been able to procure are two, addressed to his Bolognese friends, Michael Ferrucci and Liborio Veggetti. The former (dated June 6th, 1836,) is in acknowledgment of some copies of Latin Epigrams, partly from his own pen, partly from that of the Canonico Schiassi, which Ferrucci had sent to Mezzofanti: but it is chiefly noticeable for the warm interest which it evinces in the welfare of his old friend, who had written to ask advice and assistance in his candidature for a professorship in one of the Tuscan Universities, Signor Ferrucci, some time afterwards, went to Geneva, as professor of rhetoric, but he eventually obtained an appointment in the University of Pisa, where he is now Librarian.

The letter to Veggetti, (February 17, 1838,) regards his appointment as Librarian of the University

of Bologna, in which Mezzofanti had been much interested.

"I am delighted that my wishes have not been in vain or without effect, and that the Library, for so many years the object of my care, is confided to the direction of an old and distinguished pupil of my own. I need not give you any advice, knowing, as I do, what exactness and assiduity you have always shown in the discharge of your duties. Knowing, also, the good understanding you maintain with my nephew, Monsignor Minarelli, in whom I repose the fullest confidence, I need only say that if you consult with him in any doubt which may arise regarding your duties, it will be the same as if you were speaking with the old librarian himself.

I must confess I am more gratified at your having obtained this appointment, than if you had been appointed to the chair of History, a difficult post, and more difficult the farther one advances. And while I congratulate you, I must also felicitate myself on leaving in such excellent hands the precious deposit hitherto entrusted to my own care. I will not fail to profit by your work which you have so kindly presented to me."

Dr. Veggetti still holds the office of Librarian at Bologna. He continued to correspond occasionally with Mezzofanti, up to the period of his death.

CHAPTER XIV.

[1838—1841.]

AMONG the offices connected with the Roman Court, there is a certain class, known as *Poste Cardinalizie*, the tenure of which is, in the ordinary course of affairs, a step to the Cardinalate. The chief keepership of the Vatican Library is not necessarily one of these; but it had long been known that Monsignor Mezzofanti was destined for the purple; and, in a consistory held on the 12th of February, 1838, he was "preconized" as Cardinal Priest, in company with three other prelates—Angelo Mai, (who had been "reserved *in petto*" from the former year,) Orioli, and Mellini.

The order of Cardinal Priests, as is well known, are the representatives, in the more modern constitution of the Roman church, of the ancient *Presbyteri Cardinales*—the priests of the principal churches in which Baptism was administered, *(tituli Cardinales)* of the ancient city. Their number, which at the end of the fifth century was twenty-five, has been gradually increased to fifty: but the

memory of their primitive institution is preserved in the titles under which they are named, and which are taken from the churches over which the ancient Presbyters presided. The title of Cardinal Mezzofanti was derived from the ancient church of Saint Onuphrius, (Sant' Onofrio,) on the Janiculum, which is probably best known to visitors of Rome as the last resting-place of the poet Tasso.

To many persons, no doubt, the office of Cardinal has but little significance, except as a part of the stately ceremonial of the Roman court—a brilliant and enviable sinecure, sometimes the reward of distinguished merit, sometimes the prize of political influence or hereditary family claims. But to well informed readers it is scarcely necessary to explain that the College of Cardinals forms, or rather supplies, the entire deliberative and executive administration of the Pope in the general management of the affairs of the Church; holding permanently and systematically the place of the council of which we so often read in the early centuries. By the ancient constitution of the Sacred College, all matters of importance were considered and discussed in the general meeting of the body, called the Consistory; but, in the multiplication of business, it became necessary to distribute the labour; and, since the latter part of the sixteenth century,* under the great administrative Pontiffs, Paul IV., Pius IV., Pius V., and above all

* See an excellent article in Morone's "Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-ecclesiastica," as also the Kirchen-Lexicon, vol. II. 344 and foll.

Sixtus V., a system of "*congregations*" has arisen, by which, as by a series of committees, the details of all the various departments are administered; yet under the general superintendence of the Pope himself, and subject, in all things, to his final revision. Some of these congregations, (which amount to nearly twenty in all,) consist exclusively of Cardinals; some are composed both of Cardinals and prelates; and a few of prelates only: but, in almost every case, the Prefect, at least, of the congregation is a Cardinal. Some congregations meet every week, others only once a month; but in all the leading ones, as for instance in the Propaganda, there is a weekly meeting *(congresso)* of the Prefect and secretary with the clerks or *minutanti*, for the despatch of pressing business or of affairs of routine; all the business of these meetings being submitted to the Pope for his approval.

To each Cardinal, either as Prefect, or at least as member, four of these congregations, as an ordinary rule, are assigned at his first appointment; in many cases, the number is afterwards increased; and, when it is remembered that in many of these the business is weighty and complicated, often involving much documentary matter, extensive theological or canonical research, and careful investigation of precedents, &c.; and that these congregations, after all, form but a part of the duties of a Cardinal; it will be understood that his position is very far from the sinecure which the unreflecting may suppose it to be.

In the congregations assigned to Cardinal Mezzo-

fanti at his nomination, regard was of course paid to his peculiar qualifications. He was named Prefect of the "Congregation for the correction of the Liturgical Books of the Oriental Church," and also of the "Congregation of Studies." He was also, on the same grounds, appointed a member, not only of the general "Congregation of the Propaganda," but also of the special one "On the affairs of the Chinese Mission," and of those of "the Index," "of Rites," and of "the Examination of Bishops."

With a similar consideration for his well known habits and tastes, and with a due appreciation of the charity for the sick which had always characterized him, he was named President of the great Hospital of San Salvatore, and visitor of the House of Catechumens, in which, as being chiefly destined for converted Jews and Mahomedans, his acquaintance with the Hebrew and Arabic languages and literatures rendered his services peculiarly valuable.

The official revenue assigned from the Civil List for a cardinal resident in Rome, is four thousand Roman crowns (between eight and nine hundred pounds sterling); by far the greater part of which is absorbed in the necessary expenses of his household, the payment of his chaplain, secretary, and servants, the maintenance of his state equipage, &c.; so that for those cardinals who, like Mezzofanti, possess no private fortune, the remnant available for purely personal expenditure is very trifling indeed. With Mezzofanti's frugal and simple habits, however, it not only proved amply sufficient to supply all his

own modest wants, but also enabled him to enlarge and extend the unostentatious charities which, throughout his entire life, he had never failed to bestow, even while he was himself struggling against the disadvantages of a narrow and precarious income. So well known, indeed, were his almost prodigal charities, while in charge of the Vatican, and his consequent poverty at the time of his nomination to the Cardinalate, that the Pope, Gregory XVI., himself presented him, from the Pontifical establishment, the two state carriages * which form the necessary equipage of a Cardinal in all processions and other occasions of public ceremonial.

He selected for his residence the Palazzo Valentiniani, in the Piazza SS. Apostoli; where his nephew, Gaetano Minarelli, and Anna, one of his unmarried nieces, came to live with him on his nomination to the Cardinalate, and continued to reside until his death.

The news of his elevation was received with great pleasure at Bologna, and was the occasion of many public and private demonstrations. The most remarkable of these was from the Academy of the *Filopieri*, of which he had been the President at the time of his removal from Bologna. The Italians are singularly conservative of established forms; the

* A friend of mine who chanced to pass as one of these carriages (which had been dismantled preparatory to its being newly fitted up,) was on its way to the Pontifical Factory for the purpose, overheard some idle boys who were looking on, laughing at its heavy, lumbering look, and saying to each other: "*Che barcaccia!*" (What a shocking old boat!). He was greatly amused at the indignation with which the coachman resented this impertinent criticism.

members of the Academy, in accordance with a usage which may almost be called classical, met in full assembly (with all the accompaniments of decorations, inscriptions, and music, in which Italian taste is displayed on such occasions), to congratulate their fellow-academician. The congratulatory addresses, however, which in England would have been a set of speeches and resolutions, here, as became the "Lovers of the Muses," took a poetical form; and a series of odes, sonnets,* elegies, *canzoni*, *terzine*, and epigrams, in Greek, Latin, and Italian, were recited by the members. Some of them are exceedingly spirited and graceful. They were all collected into a little volume, which, with great delicacy and good taste, is dedicated not to the Cardinal himself, but to his nephew, Monsignor Joseph Minarelli, of whom I have already spoken, and who was at this time Rector of the university of Bologna.†

A still more characteristic tribute on his elevation

* A sample of Mezzofanti's own performance as a Filopiero—his reply to the verses of his friend, Count Marchesi—is given by Marchetti, in his *Pugine Monumentali*, p. 150.

De tuoi versi il contento,
Cosi nell' alma io sento,
Che versi rendo gratulando teco,
Ma oime'! ch' io son qual eco,
Che molti suoni asconde,
E languida da lungi al fin responde.

† The title is "All' Ementissimo Signor Cardinale Giuseppe Mezzofanti, Bolognese, elevato all' Onore della Porpora Romana, Applausi dei Filopieri, 8vo., Bologna, 1838." A similar tribute from the pen of Doctor Veggetti, who had succeeded Mezzofanti as Librarian, appeared a short time before, entitled "Tributo di Lode a Giuseppe Mezzofanti, Bolognese, creato Cardinale il Giorno 12 Febbraro, 1838." Bologna, 1838.

was a polyglot visit of congratulation from his young friends in the Propaganda. A party of fifty-three, comprising all the languages and nationalities at that time represented in the institution, waited upon him to offer their greetings in their various tongues. The new Cardinal was at once amused by the novel exhibition, and gratified by the compliment thus delicately implied. True, however, to his old character for readiness and dexterity, he was found fully equal to the occasion, and answered each in his own language with great spirit and precision.*

Cardinal Mezzofanti's elevation, of course, brought him into closer, and, if possible, more affectionate relations with the Pope. Among his brethren of the Sacred College, too, there were many whom, even as prelate, he could call his friends. I have already spoken of his relations with the learned Cardinal Giustiniani, and the venerable Cardinal Pacca. With Cardinal Lambruschini, the Secretary of State, and Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, he had long been on a footing of most confidential intimacy. His especial friends, however, were Cardinals Mai, Polidori, Bernetti, and the amiable and learned English Cardinal Acton, who, although not proclaimed till 1842, was named *in petto* in the year after the elevation of Cardinal Mezzofanti.†

* Stolz, Biografia, p. 7.

† A bon-mot on occasion of Monsignor Mezzofanti's elevation, which I heard from Cardinal Wiseman, and which is ascribed to the good old Cardinal Rivarola, is worth recording, although the point is not fully appreciable, except in Italian.

Mezzofanti, from his childhood, had worn ear-rings, as a preven-

But, with the exception of the public and ceremonial observances which his new dignity exacted, it brought no change in his simple, and almost ascetic manner of life. The externals of his household, of course, underwent considerable alteration, but his personal habits remained the same. He continued to rise at the same hour: his morning devotions, his daily mass, his visits to the hospitals, and other private acts of charity, remained unaltered. His table, though displaying somewhat more ceremonial, continued almost as frugal, and entirely as simple, as before his elevation. He persevered, unless when prevented by his various official duties, in paying his daily visit to the Propaganda, and in assisting and directing the studies of its young inmates, with all his accustomed friendliness and familiarity. His affability to visitors, even of the humblest class, was, if possible, increased. Above all, as regarded his favourite studies, and the exercise of his wonderful talent, his elevation to the Cardinalate brought no abatement of enthusiasm, and no relaxation of energy. It is not merely that the visitors who saw him as Cardinal, concur in attesting the unaltered activity of his mind, and the undiminished interest with which

tive, according to the popular notion, against an affection of the eyes, to which he had been subject. Some one observed that it was strange to see a "Cardinal wearing ear-rings," (*chi porta orecchini.*)

"Not at all," rejoined Cardinal Rivarola, "Ci han da essere tanti uomini in dignità che portano *orecchine* ("long ears"—"asses ears,") e perchè non ci ha da essere uno almeno chi porti *orecchini*? (ear-rings.) There are many dignitaries who have *orecchine*, (asses-ears), and why should not there be at least one with *orecchini*—ear-rings?"

he availed himself of every new opportunity of perfecting or exercising his favourite accomplishment. For years after his elevation, he continued to add zealously and successfully to the stores which he had already laid up. There is distinct evidence that after this period, (although he had now entered upon his sixty-fourth year,) he acquired several languages, with which he had previously had little, and perhaps no acquaintance.

A very interesting instance has been communicated to me by M. Antoine d'Abbadie,* who visited the Cardinal in 1839, at Rome. M. d'Abbadie had been a traveller from early manhood. Setting out in the year 1837, in company with his brother Arnauld, to explore the sources of the White Nile, he traversed the greater part of north eastern Africa. Their wanderings, however, proved a mission of religion and charity, no less than of science. During their long and varied intercourse with the several tribes of Abyssinia, they observed with painful interest that strange admixture of primitive Catholic truth with gross and revolting superstition by which all travellers have been struck ; and their first care was to study carefully the condition of the country and the character of the people, with a view to the organization of a judicious and effective missionary expe-

* Perhaps it is not generally known that the brothers Antoine and Arnauld d'Abbadie, although French by name, fortune, and education, are not only children of an Irish mother, but were born, and spent the first years of childhood, in Dublin. M. Antoine d'Abbadie lived in Dublin till his eighth year. See his letter to the Athenæum, (Cairo, Nov. 15, 1848,) vol. for 1849, p. 93.

dition by which their many capabilities for good might be developed. Hence, it is that, while their letters, reports, and essays, communicated to the various scientific journals and societies of France and England,* have added largely to our knowledge of the languages,† the geography, and the natural history of these imperfectly explored provinces, their services to the Church by the introduction of missionaries, by the advice and information which they have uniformly afforded them, and even by their own personal co-operation in the great work, have entitled them to the gratitude of all to whom the interests of truth and civilization are dear.

M. Antoine d'Abbadie, after two years spent in such labours, returned to Europe in 1839, for the purpose of preparing himself for a further and more systematic exploration. On arriving in Rome, he took an early opportunity of waiting upon the Cardinal, accompanied by two Abyssinians, who spoke only the Amarinna language, and by a Galla servant, whose native (and only) language was the Ilmorma, a tongue almost entirely unknown, even to the learned in this branch of philology.‡ M. d'Abbadie himself

* The *Journal Asiatique*, passim; the Athenaeum, 1839, 1845, 1849: the Geographical Society of France, and of England, &c.

† M. d'Abbadie collected with great care, as opportunity offered, vocabularies, more or less extensive, of a vast number of the languages of this region of Africa. His collections, also, on the natural history and geography, as well as on the religious and social condition of the country, are most extensive and valuable. The work in which he is understood to be engaged upon the subject, is looked for with much interest.

‡ When M. d'Abbadie, in one of his letters to the Athenaeum,

spoke Basque, a language which was still new to Mezzofanti ; and he was thus witness of what was certainly a very unwonted scene—the great Polyglottist completely at fault.

" I saw Cardinal Mezzofanti," writes M. d'Abbadie, " in 1839. He asked me in Arabic what language I wished to speak, and I, in order to test him, proposed conversing in Basque. I am far from knowing this idiom well ; but, as I transact my farmer's business in Basque, I can easily puzzle a foreigner in it. The Cardinal waived my proposal, and asked me what African language I would speak. I now spoke Amarinna, i.e., the language named *Ancharica* by Ludolf, who probably added the final *c* in order to suit the word to Latin articulation. Not being able to answer in Amarinna, Mezzofanti said: *Ti amirnu timhirta lisana Gi-iz* ('Have you the knowledge of the Gi-iz language ?') This was well said, and beautifully pronounced, but shewed that the Cardinal got his knowledge of Gi-iz from persons who read, but did not speak it in general. I afterwards ascertained in Abyssinia that no professor, i.e., no person accustomed to colloquial Gi-iz, had been yet in Rome, during this century at least. I may here mention that Gi-iz, generally called Ethiopic in Europe, is the liturgical language in Abyssinia, where it is looked on by the learned as a dead language, although it is still spoken by at least one of the shepherd tribes near the Red Sea. In my visit to Cardinal Mezzofanti, I had with me two Amara Abyssines, with whom he could not speak, as neither of them knew Gi-iz enough, and I had not yet learned that language. My third companion was a Galla, who had taught me his language, viz., Ilmorma, in a most tedious way, for he knew no other tongue, and I was forced to elicit every meaning by a slowly convergent series of questions, which I put every time he used a word new to me. Some of these had until then remained a mystery to me ; as the word *self*, and some others of

first alluded to the Ilmorma, its existence, as a distinct language, was absolutely denied.

the same abstract class. I had likewise laboured in vain to get the Ilmorma word for 'soul'; and having mentioned all this to Mezzofanti, I added, that as a philologist and a father of the church, he could render me no better service than giving me the means of teaching my Galla barbarian that he had a soul to be saved. 'Could not your eminence,' said I, 'find the means of learning from this African what is the word for soul? I have written twelve hundred words of his language, which you will certainly turn to better account than I can.' The Cardinal made no direct answer. I saw him several times afterwards, and he always addressed me in Arabic; but, being a tyro in that language, I could not pretend to judge his knowledge or fluency. However, a native Syrian then in Rome, told me that both were admirable: this referred, I suppose now, to the Syrian dialect."

A failure so unusual for Mezzofanti, and in so many languages, could not but prove a stimulus to the industry of this indefatigable student. He was at the moment busily engaged in the revision of the Maronite and Armenian liturgies;—a circumstance, by the way, which perhaps may account for his passing over without notice, M. d'Abbadie's proposal about the Galla language;—but, a few months later, he addressed himself to the Amarinna with all the energy of his most youthful days. How it ended, we shall see.

In the close of July, 1841, when I first had the honour of seeing him, he was surrounded by a group of Abyssinians, who had just come to Rome under the escort of Monsignor de Jacobis, the apostolic Prefect of the Abyssinian mission. These Abyssinians were all reputed to be persons of distinction among their countrymen, and several of the number were understood to be professors and men of letters. The Cardinal was speaking to them freely and without

embarrassment; and his whole manner, as well as theirs, appeared to me (so far as one entirely unacquainted with the language could judge) to indicate that he spoke with ease, and was understood by them without an effort. Thinking it probable, however, that M. d'Abbadie during his second sojourn in Abyssinia, must have known something of this mission, I thought it well to write to him on the subject. He informed me, in reply, that the Abyssinians whom I had thus seen were a deputation of the schismatical Christians of that country, who had been sent by the native chieftains to Alexandria, to obtain from the Patriarch (to whom they so far recognise their subjection) the consecration of the Abun, or Primate, of their national church. Father de Jacobis, who was their fellow-traveller as far as Alexandria, induced them to accompany him to Rome, where they were so much struck with all that they saw and heard, that "two out of the three professors of Gondar, who were the leaders of the deputation, have, since their return, freely and knowingly entered the one true Church—Amari, Kanfu, and the one-eyed professor, Gab'ra Mikaël." One of these told M. d'Abbadie that "Cardinal Mezzofanti conversed very well with him in Amarinna, and that he also knew the Gi-iz language." He had thus learned the Amarinna between 1839 and 1841.

I am indebted to M. d'Abbadie for an account of another still later acquisition of the Cardinal's declining years. Before the summer of 1841, he had

acquired the Amarinna language. Now at that time he was actually engaged, with all the energy of his early years, in the study of the proverbially "impossible"* Basque, in which, as we have seen, M. d'Abbadie found him a novice in 1839.

One of my companions in Rome in 1841, the lamented Guido Görres, of Munich, son of the venerable author of that name, and himself one of the most accomplished writers of Catholic Germany, having chanced to say to the Cardinal that he was then engaged in the study of Basque, the latter proposed that they should pursue it in company. Their readings had only just commenced when I last saw Herr Görres; but M. d'Abbadie's testimony at a later date places the Cardinal's success in this study likewise entirely beyond question. He had not only learned before the year 1844, the general body of the language, but even mastered its various dialects so as to be able to converse both in the Labourdain and the Souletin; which, it should be observed, are not simply dialects of Basque, but minor sub-divisions of one out of the four leading dialects which prevail in the different districts of Biscay and Navarre.

* One of the writers on the Basque Grammar, Manuel de Larramendi, entitles his book, Impossible vencido, ("The Impossible Overcome,") 8vo. Salamanca, 1729. Some idea, though a faint one, of the difficulty of this Grammar, may be formed from the number and names of the words of a Basque verb. They are no less than eleven; and are denominated by grammarians, the Indicative, the Consuetudinal, the Potential, the Voluntary, the Necessary (coactive,) the Imperative, Subjunctive, Optative, *Penitudinary* (!) and Infinitive.—The variety of tenses in Basque also, is very great. But it should be added that the structure of these moods and tenses is described as singularly philosophical, and full of harmony and of analogy.

"My friend M. Dassance," says M. d'Abbadie, "who has published several works, and who, after declining a bishopric, is still a canon in the Bayonne Cathedral, told me the other day, that, on visiting the Cardinal in 1844, he was surprised to hear him speak French with that peculiar Parisian accent which pertains to the ancient nobility of the Faubourg St. Germain. This is a nice distinction of which several Frenchmen are not aware. On hearing that Dassance was a Basque, the Cardinal immediately said: *Mingo zitugu ? (verbatim*—'Of whence have we you'?) thus shewing that he had mastered the tremendous difficulty of our vernacular verb. The ensuing conversation took place in the pure Labourdain dialect, which is spoken here (at Urrugne,) but one of the professors of the Bayonne Seminary, Father Chilo, from Soule, avers that the Cardinal spoke to him in the Souletin dialect."*

I afterwards shewed to M. d'Abbadie a short sentence in Basque which the Cardinal wrote with his own hand, and which is printed among the fac similes prefixed to this volume.

Tauna! zu servitzea da erreguinatea;
Zu maitatzea da zoriona,
"Lord! to serve Thee is to reign;
To love Thee, is happiness."

M. d'Abbadie, as also his Highness Prince Lewis L. Bonaparte, to whom M. d'Abbadie submitted it, had some doubt as to the propriety of the form, '*zu* servitzea,' '*zu* maitatzea'; both of them preferring to write *zuꞩe*. But, as the dialect in which the sentence is written is that of Guipuscoa, both his Highness and M. d'Abbadie have kindly taken the trouble to refer the question to native Guipuscoan scholars; and I

* Letter of M. d'Abbadie, May 6, 1855.

have had the gratification to learn by a letter of M. d'Abbadie, (January 18th, 1858,) that "the construction '*zu* servitzea,' is perfectly correct in Guipuscoan."

M. d'Abbadie subjoins, that, in addition to the authority of his friend, M. Dassance, for the Cardinal's knowledge of Basque, he has since been assured by a Spanish lady, a native of San Sebastian, the capital of Guipuscoa, that the Cardinal had also conversed with her in her native Guipuscoan dialect. Moreover, when M. Manavit saw him in Rome in 1846, he translated freely in his presence a newly published Basque catechism, which M. Manavit presented to him on the part of the Bishop of Astros: and several distinguished Biscayan ecclesiastics assured M. Manavit that the Cardinal spoke both the dialects of Basque with equal fluency.* In a word, it appears impossible to doubt the complete success of this, one of his latest essays in the acquisition of a new language.

As the object of this biography, however, is not merely to bring together such marvels as these, but to collect all the materials for a just portraiture of the linguist himself, I must place in contrast with these truly wonderful narratives, the judgments of other travellers, in order that the reader may be enabled to modify each by comparison with its pendant, and to form his own estimate from a just combination of both.

It must be confessed, as a set off against the wonders which have been just recounted, that there were others of Mezzofanti's visitors who were unable

* Manavit, p. 109.

to see in him any of these excellencies. I think, however, that these depreciatory judgments will be found for the most part to proceed from ignorant and superficial tourists, and from those who are least qualified to form an accurate estimate of the attainments of a linguist, One of the heaviest penalties of eminence is the exposure which it involves to impertinent or malevolent criticism, nor is it wonderful that one who received so great a variety of visitors as did Mezzofanti, should have had his share of this infliction.

Mrs. Paget, a Transylvanian lady, married to an English gentleman, who saw Mezzofanti a little before M. d'Abbadie, is cited by Mr. Watts.* Her characteristic is rather recklessness and ill-breeding than positive malevolence. But as her strictures, ill-bred as they are, contain some facts which tend to illustrate the main subject of inquiry, I shall insert them without abridgment.

"Mezzofanti entered, in conversation with two young Moors, and, turning to us, asked us to be seated. On me his first appearance produced an unfavourable impresson. His age might be about seventy; he was small in stature, dry, and of a pale unhealthy look. His whole person was in monkey-like restless motion. We conversed together for some time. He speaks Hungarian well enough, and his pronunciation is not bad. I asked him from whom he had learned it; he said from the common soldiers at Milan. He had read the works of Kisfaludi and Csokonai, Pethe's Natural History, and some other Hungarian books, but it seemed to me that he rather studies the words than

* Olaszhoni es Schweizi Vtazas Irta Paget Janosné Wesselenyi Polyxena, 1842, vol. I., p. 180. Mr. Watts's Memoir, p. 121.

the subject of what he reads. Some English being present, he spoke English with them very fluently and well; with me he afterwards spoke French and German, and he even addressed me in Wallachian; but to my shame I was unable to answer. He asked if I knew Slowakian. In showing us some books, he read out from them in Ancient and Modern Greek, Latin and Hebrew. To a priest who was with us, and who had travelled in Palestine, he spoke in Turkish. I asked him how many languages he knew: 'Not many,' he replied, 'for I only speak forty or fifty.' Amazing incomprehensible faculty! but not one that I should in the least be tempted to envy; for the empty unreflecting word-knowledge, and the innocently exhibited small vanity with which he was filled, reminded me rather of a monkey or a parrot, a talking machine, or a sort of organ wound up for the performance of certain tunes, than of a being endowed with reason. He can, in fact, only be looked upon as one of the curiosities of the Vatican.

"At parting, I took an opportunity of asking if he would allow me to present an Hungarian book to the Vatican library. My first care at my hôtel was to send a copy of M. W.'s book, 'Balitéletekröl' ('On Prejudices')* to the binder, and a few days afterwards I took it, handsomely bound in white leather, to Mezzofanti, whom I found in a hurry to go and baptize some Jews and Moors. As soon as he saw the book, without once looking into it, even to ascertain the name of the author, he called out, 'Ah! igen szép, igen szép, munka. Szepen van bekötve. Aranyos, szép, szép, igen szép, igen koszönöm.' (Ah! very fine, very fine, very finely bound. Beautiful, very fine, very fine, thank you very much;)—and put it away in a book-case. Unhappy Magyar volumes, never looked at out of their own country, but by some curious student of philology like Mezzofanti, and in their own country read by how few!".

Now, in the first place, in the midst of this lady's supercilious and depreciatory strictures, it may safely

* This book is in the Library Catalogue, p. 138.

be inferred, that Mezzofanti's Hungarian at least must have been unexceptionable, in order to draw from one so evidently prejudiced, the admission that he "spoke it well enough," and that "his pronunciation was not bad." Lest, however, any doubt should be created by these grudging acknowledgments, I shall quote the testimony of a Hungarian nobleman, Baron Glucky de Stenitzer, who met the Cardinal in Rome some years later, in 1845. The Baron not only testifies to the excellence of his Magyar, but affirms "that, in the course of the interview, his Eminence spoke no less than four different dialects of that tongue—the pure Magyar of Debreczeny, that of the environs of Eperies, that of Pesth, and that of Transylvania!"

In like manner, though Madame Paget takes upon her to say, that "the Cardinal studies the words rather than the subject of what he reads," Baron Glucky found him "profoundly versed in the laws and constitution of Hungary"; and when, in speaking of the extraordinary power enjoyed by the Primate of Hungary, the Baron chanced to allude to his privilege of coining money, his Eminence promptly reminded him that "this privilege had been withdrawn by the Emperor Ferdinand, and even quoted the year of the edict by which it was annulled!"*

As regards the dashing style in which this lady sets aside the Cardinal's Magyar reading, which *only* embraced "the works of Kisfaludi and Czokonai, Pethe's Natural History, and some other Hungarian books," it may be enough for the reader to know that, without reckoning the "other Hungarian books," the

* Letter of June 6, 1855.

three works which she names thus slightingly, comprise no less than *seven volumes* of poetry and miscellaneous literature.

For what remains of her strictures upon the character of Mezzofanti—strictures be it observed, which she has the hardihood to offer, although her entire knowledge was derived from two interviews of a few minutes, among a crowd of other visitors—her charge of love of display, "empty word-knowledge," "monkey-like" exhibition, and the other pettinesses of "small vanity," the best commentary that can be offered is an account of the Cardinal published at this very period, by one who knew him intimately during a residence of many months in Rome, who was actually for a time his pupil or fellow student, and who, from his position, was thoroughly conversant, not only with the sentiments of the Cardinal's friends and admirers, but with all the variety of criticisms to which, according to the diversity of tastes and opinions, his character and his gifts were subjected in the general society of the literary circles of Rome—I mean the amiable and learned Guido Görres. I may add that I myself was Herr Görres's companion in one of his interviews with the Cardinal.

"If any one should imagine," he writes, (in the Historisch-Politische Blätter,* of which, conjointly with Dr. Phillips, he was editor,) "that all the honours which he has received have produced the slightest effect upon his character or disposition, he is grievously mistaken. Under all the insignia of the cardinalate, Mezzofanti is still the same plain, simple, almost bashful, good-natured, conscientious, indefatigable, active priest that he was, while a poor professor, struggling by the exercise of his talents,

* Volume X. (1842.) p. 227—279-80.

in the humblest form, to gain a livelihood for the relatives who were dependant on his exertions. Although his head is stored with so many languages, it has never, as so frequently occurs to the learned, shown the least indication of lightness. As Prefect of the House of Catechumens he is merely of course, charged with the supervision of their instruction; but he still discharges the duty in person, with all the exactness of a conscientious schoolmaster. He visits the establishment almost every day, and devotes a considerable part of his income to the support of its inmates.

In like manner he still, as Cardinal, maintains with the Propaganda precisely the same relations which he held as a simple prelate. Although he is not bound thereto by any possible obligation, he devotes every day to the students of that institution, in summer an hour, in winter an hour and a half. He practises them and also himself in their several languages, and zealously avails himself of the opportunity thus afforded him, to exhort them to piety and to strengthen them in the spirit of their calling.

It is scarcely necessary to say that these youths regard their disinterested friend and benefactor with the most devoted affection. * * * * * *

When I spoke to him, one day, about his relations with the pupils, he said to me, 'It is not as a Cardinal I go there; it is as a student—as a youth—(giovanetto.)'

* * * * * * *

He is familiar with all the European languages. And by this we understand not merely the old classical tongues and the first class modern ones; that is to say, the Greek and Latin, the Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German and English; his knowledge embraces also the languages of the second class, viz. the Dutch, the Polish, Bohemian or Czechish, and Servian, the Hungarian, and Turkish; and even those of the third and fourth class—the Irish, Welsh, Albanian, Wallachian, Bulgarian, and Illyrian—are equally at his command. On my happening to mention that I had once dabbled a little in Basque, he at once proposed that we should set about it together. Even the Romani of the Alps, and the Lettish, are not unfamiliar to him; nay, he has made himself acquainted with Lappish, the language

of the wretched nomadic tribes of Lapland; although he told me he did not know whether it should be called Lappish or Laplandish. He is master of all the languages which are classed under the Indo-German family—the Sanscrit and Persian, the Koordish, the Armenian, and the Georgian; he is familiar with all the members of the Semitic family, the Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Samaritan, Chaldee, Sabaic, and even the Chinese, which he not only reads but speaks. As regards Africa, he knows the Coptic, Ethiopic, Abyssinian, Amharic, and Angolese."

Görres adds what I have already mentioned, as a characteristic mark of their affectionate gratitude, that forty-three of his Propaganda scholars waited upon him on occasion of his promotion to the Cardinalate, and addressed to him a series of congratulations, each in his native dialect. He fully bears out too, the assurance which has been repeated over and over again by every one who had really enjoyed the intimacy of the Cardinal, that, frequently as he came before the public in circumstances which seemed to savour of display, and freely as he contributed to the amusement of his visitors by exhibiting in conversation with them his extraordinary acquirements, he was entirely free from that vanity to which Madame Paget thinks proper to ascribe it all.

"With all his high qualifications," says the Rev. Ingraham Kip,* a clergyman of the American episcopal church, "there is a modesty about Cardinal Mezzofanti which shrinks from anything like praise." "It would be a cruel misconception of his character," says Guido Görres, "to imagine that, with all the admiration and all the wonder of which he habitually saw

* Christmas Holidays at Rome. By the Rev. Ingraham Kip, edited by the Rev. W. Sewell, p. 175.

himself the object, he yet prided himself in the least upon this extraordinary gift. 'Alas!' he once said to a friend of mine, a good simple priest, who, sharing in the universal curiosity to see this wonderful celebrity, apologized to the Cardinal for his visit by some compliment upon his European reputation: —'alas! what will all these languages avail me for the kingdom of heaven, since it is by works, not words, that we must win our way thither!'"

In truth Cardinal Mezzofanti possessed in an eminent degree the great safeguard of christian humility —a habitual consciousness of what he *was not*, rather than a self-complacent recollection of what he was. He used to speak freely of his acquirement as one of little value, and one especially for which he himself had little merit—a mere physical endowment—a thing of instinct, and almost of routine. God, he said, had gifted him with a good memory and a quick ear. There lay the secret of his success—"What am I," he would pleasantly say, "but an ill-bound dictionary!" "He used to disparage his gifts to me," says Cardinal Wiseman; "and he once quoted a saying ascribed to Catherine de Medici, who when told that Scaliger knew twenty languages, observed, 'that is twenty words for one idea! For my part I would rather have twenty ideas for one word!'" On one occasion, after the publication of Cardinal Wiseman's *Horæ Syriacæ*, Mezzofanti said to him: "You have put your knowledge of languages to some purpose: When I go, I shall not leave a trace of what I know behind me!" And when his friend suggested that it was not

yet too late, he "shook his head and said it was"—which he also repeated to Guido Görres, earnestly expressing his "regret that his youth had fallen upon a time when languages were not studied from that scientific point of view from which they are now regarded." In a word, the habitual tendency of his mind in reference to himself, and to his own acquirements, was to depreciate them, and to dwell rather upon his own deficiency and short-comings, than upon his success.

Accordingly, while he was always ready to gratify the learned interest, or even to amuse the lighter curiosity, with which his extraordinary talent was regarded, there was as little thought of himself in the performance, and as little idea of display, as though he were engaged in an ordinary animated conversation. It was to him an exciting agreeable exercise and nothing more. He engaged in it for its own sake. To him it was as natural to talk in a foreign language as it would be to another to sing, to relate a lively anecdote, or to take part in an interesting discussion. To his humble and guileless mind the notion of exhibition never presented itself. He retained to his latest hour and through all the successive steps of his advancement, the simplicity and lightheartedness of boyhood. It was impossible to spend half an hour in his company without feeling the literal truth of what he himself said to Görres regarding his relations to the pupils of the Propaganda;—that he went among them not as a Cardinal, but as a school-boy,*(giovanetto)* What Madame Paget puts down to the account of

"small vanity," was in reality the result of these almost boyish spirits, and of this simple and unaffected good nature. He delighted in amusing and giving pleasure; he was always ready to display his extraordinary gifts, partly for the gratification of others, partly because it was to himself an innocent and amusing relaxation: but, among the various impulses to which he yielded, unquestionably the idea of display was the last that occurred to him as a motive of action. I can say, from my own observation, that never in the most distinguished circle, did he give himself to those linguistic exercises with half the spirit which he evinced among his humble friends, the obscure and almost nameless students of the Propaganda.

CHAPTER XV.

[1841—1843.]

ALTHOUGH my own recollections of Cardinal Mezzofanti, in comparison with those which have already been laid before the reader, are so few and unimportant that I hesitated at one time as to the propriety of alluding to them, I feel that I should be very forgetful of the kindness which I experienced at all times at his hands, were I to withhold the impressions of his character as well as of his gifts, which I received from my intercourse with him.

I saw Cardinal Mezzofanti for the first time, in July, 1841. He was then in his sixty-seventh year: but, although his look and colour betrayed the delicacy of his constitution, his carriage, as yet, exhibited little indication of the feebleness of approaching age. He was below the middle stature, and altogether of a diminutive, though light, and in youth most active frame. His shoulders, it is true, were slightly

rounded, and his chest had an appearance of contraction; but his movements were yet free, tolerably vigorous, and, although perhaps too hurried for dignity, not ungraceful. His hair was plentifully dashed with gray; but, except on the crown, where the baldness was but partially concealed by the red *zucchetto*, (skull cap,) it was still thick and almost luxuriant. More than one portrait of him has been published, and several of those who saw him at different times have recorded their impressions of his appearance: but I cannot say that any of these portraitures, whether of pencil or of pen, conveys a full idea of the man. His countenance was one of those which Madame Dudevant strangely, but yet significantly, describes as "not a face, but a physiognomy." Its character lay far less in the features than in the expression. The former, taken separately, were unattractive, and even insignificant. The proportions of the face were far from regular. The complexion was dead and colourless, and these defects were made still more remarkable by a small mole upon one cheek. There was an occasional nervous winking of the eyelids, too, which produced an air of weakness, and at times even of constraint; but there was, nevertheless, a pervading expression of gentleness, simplicity, and open-hearted candour, which carried off all these individual defects, and which no portrait could adequately embody. Mr. Monckton Milnes told me that the best likeness of the Cardinal he ever saw, was the kneeling figure in Raffaelle's noble picture, the Madonna di Foligno: and undoubtedly, without

any close affinity of lineament, it has a strong general similitude of air and expression :—the same "open brow of undisturbed humanity," on which no passion had written a single line, and which care had touched only to soften and spiritualize ; the same quiet smile, playful, yet subdued, humility blended with self-respect, modesty unmarred by shyness or timidity ;—above all the same

Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard—

radiant with a sweetness which I have seldom seen equalled ; singularly soft and winning, and possessing that undefined power which is the true beauty of an honest eye—a full and earnest, but not scrutinizing look—deep, but tranquil, and placing you entirely at ease with yourself by assuring you of its own perfect calmness and self-possession. But the great charm of Cardinal Mezzofanti's countenance was the look of purity and innocence which it always wore. I have seldom seen a face which retained in old age so much of the simple expression of youth, I had almost said of childhood ; although, with all this gaiety and light-heartedness, there was a gentle gravity in his bearing which kept it in perfect harmony with his years and character. He had acquired, or he possessed from nature, the rare and difficult characteristic of cheerful old age, to which Rochefoucault alludes when he says :—*Peu de gens savent être vieux.* And thus he was equally at home among his venerable peers of the Consistory, and in the youngest and most light-hearted *camerata* of the Propaganda. No old man ever illustrated more clearly that

The heart—the heart, is the heritage
Which keepeth the old man young!

During a sojourn of some weeks in Rome, in the summer of 1841, I had the honour of conversing with his eminence several times; at the Propaganda; at the Roman Seminary; at a meeting of the Accademia della Religione Cattolica; and more than once in his own apartments. In the course of one of these interviews I heard him speak in several languages, to different acquaintances whom he met, and with each of whom he conversed in his own tongue—English, German, French, Spanish, Romaic, and Hungarian. With myself his conversation was always in English.

His English, as we have seen, has been variously judged. Herr Fleck describes it as "only middling:" by others it is pronounced to be undistinguishable from that of a native. The truth, as in all such cases, lies between these extremes.

All visitors, with the single exception of Herr Fleck, (certainly a very questionable authority,) concur in admitting at least the perfect fluency and strict grammatical accuracy of the Cardinal's English conversation: but some have hesitated as to its idiomatical propriety. M. Crawford, ex-secretary of the Ionian Islands, told M. d'Abbadie* last year, that Mezzofanti appeared to him to use some un-English constructions. To Dean Milman, who was introduced to him several years ago by Mr. Francis Hare, his English appeared "as if learned from books,

* Letter of October 11, 1857.

grammatical, rather than idiomatical."* And Lady Morgan even determines the period of English literature on which his English appeared to be modelled.†

I cannot fully concur, nevertheless, in this opinion. My own impressions of the Cardinal's English, derived from many conversations on different occasions, agree with those already quoted from Mr. Stewart Rose, Lady Blessington, Mr. Harford, Bishop Baines, Cardinal Wiseman, and others, who attest his perfect accuracy both of grammar and of idiom. Mr. Badeley, the eminent lawyer, who saw him but one year before his death, told me that "he spoke English in a perfectly easy and natural manner;" and Mr. Kip, whose visit was about the same time, declares that, "in the course of a long conversation which he held with the Cardinal, his eminence did not use a single expression or word in any way that was not strictly and idiomatically correct." It is true that I should hardly have been deceived as to his being a foreigner; but the slight, though to my ear decisive, foreign characteristics of his English, were rather of accent than of language; or, if they regarded language at all, it was not that his expressions were unidiomatical, or that his vocabulary was wanting in propriety, but merely that his sentences were occasionally more formal—more like the periods of a regular oratorical composition than is common in the freedom of every-day conversation. Nor did the peculiarity of accent to which I refer amount to anything like absolute impropriety. His pronunciation

* Letter of Feb. 23, 1847.

† Italy I. 292.

was most exact; his accentuation almost unerring; and, although it certainly could be distinguished from that of a born Englishman, the difference lay chiefly in its being more marked, and in its precision being more evidently the result of effort and of rule, than the unstudied and instinctive enunciation of a native speaking his own language. If I were disposed to criticize it very strictly, I might say (paradoxical as this may seem,) that, *compared with the enunciation of a native*, it was almost *too correct to appear completely natural;* and that its very correctness gave to it some slight tendency to that extreme which the Italians themselves, in reference to their own language in the mouth of a stranger, describe as *caricato*. But I have no hesitation in saying, that I never met any foreigner, not resident in England, whose English conversation could be preferred to Mezzofanti's. The foreign peculiarity was, in my judgment, so slight as to be barely perceptible, and I have myself known more than one instance similar to that already related from Cardinal Wiseman, in which Irish visitors meeting the Cardinal for the first time, without knowing who he was, took him *for an English dignitary*,* mistaking the slight trace of foreign peculiarity which I have described for what is called in Ireland, "the English accent."

Indeed with what care he had attended to the niceties of English pronunciation—the great stumbling

* I think it was the late Rev. John Smyth, a clergyman of Dublin, who, while I myself was in Rome, conversed with Cardinal Mezzofanti under the impression that he was speaking with the English Cardinal Acton.

block of all foreign students of the language—may be inferred from his familiarity with the peculiar characteristics, even of the provincial dialects. It will be recollected how he had amused Mr. Harford in 1817, by his specimens of the Yorkshire and the *Zummer*setshire dialects, and how successfully he imitated for Mr. Walsh the slang of a London cabman. And a still more amusing example of the minuteness of his knowledge of these dialects has been communicated to me by Rev. Mr. Grant of Lytham, brother of my friend the Bishop of Southwark, to whose unfailing kindness I am indebted for this and for many other most interesting particulars regarding the Cardinal. Mr. Grant was presented to his eminence in the Spring of 1841, by the Rev. Father Kelleher, an Irish Carmelite, of which order the Cardinal was Protector. After some preliminaries the conversation turned upon the English language.

"'You have many patois in the English language,' said the Cardinal. 'For instance, the Lancashire dialect is very different from that spoken by the Cockneys; [he used this word;—] so much so, that some Londoners would find considerable difficulty in understanding what a Lancashire man said. The Cockneys always use *v* instead of *w*, and *w* instead of *v*: so that they say 'vine' instead of 'wine;' [he gave this example.] And then the Irish *brogue*, as it is called, is another variety. I remember very distinctly having a conversation with an Irish gentleman whom I met soon after the peace, and he always mis-pronounced that word, calling it '*pace*.'"

Here, F. Kelleher broke out into a horse-laugh, and, slapping his hand upon his thigh, cried out, 'Oh! excèllent! your

Eminence, excèllent!' 'Now, there you are wrong,' said Mezzofanti: 'you ought not to say excèllent, but èxcellent.'

Then he went off into a disquisition on the word 'great,' contending that, according to all analogy, it should be pronounced like '*greet*'—for that the diphthong *ea* is so pronounced in almost all, if not in *every* word, in which it occurs; and he instanced these words:—'*eagle, meat, beat, fear,*' and some others. And he said Lord Chesterfield thought the same, and considered it a vulgarism to pronounce it like 'grate.' He next spoke about the Welsh language—but I really quite forget what he said: I only remember that the impression left on me was that he knew Welsh also."

As to the extent of his acquaintance with English literature, my own personal knowledge is very limited. His only allusion to the subject which I recollect, was a question which he put to me about the completion of Moore's History of Ireland. He expressed a strong feeling of regret that we had not some Irish History, as learned, as impartial, and as admirable in its style, as Lingard's History of England.

This is a point, however, on which we have the concurring testimony of a number of English visitors, extending over a period of nearly thirty years. The report of Mr. Harford in 1817, has been already quoted; Dr. Cox of Southampton, spoke with high admiration of the Cardinal's powers as an English critic. Cardinal Wiseman assures me that "he often heard him speaking on English style, and criticizing our writers with great justness and accuracy. He certainly," adds the Cardinal, "knew the language and its literature far better than many an English gentleman." With Mr. Henry Grattan, then (in the

year 1843,) member of Parliament for Meath, he held a long conversation on the English language and literature, especially its poets.

"He spoke in English," says Mr. Grattan, "and with great rapidity. He talked of Milton, Pope, Gray, and Chaucer. Milton, he observed, was our English Homer, but he was formed by the study of Dante, and of the Prophets. On Gray's Elegy, and on Moore's Melodies, he dwelt with great delight; of the latter he repeated some passages, and admired them extremely. Chaucer, he said, was taken from Boccaccio. He added that Milton, besides his merit as an English poet, also wrote very pretty Italian poetry. Talking of French literature, he said that, properly speaking, the French have no poetry: 'they have too much poetry in their prose,' said he, 'and besides they want the heart that is necessary for genuine poetry.'"

But the most extraordinary example of Mezzofanti's minute acquaintance with English literature that I have heard, has been communicated to me by Mr. Badeley, who found him quite familiar with an author so little read, even by Englishmen, as Hudibras!

"The Cardinal," says Mr. Badeley, "received me most graciously; his first question was, 'Well, what language shall we talk?' I said, 'Your eminence's English is doubtless far better than my Italian, and therefore we had better speak English.' He accordingly spoke English to me, in the most easy and natural manner, and the conversation soon turned upon the English language, and upon English literature; and his reference to some of our principal authors, such as Milton, and others of that class, shewed me that he was well acquainted with them. We talked of translations, and I mentioned that the most extraordinary translation I had ever seen was that of Hudibras in French. He quite started with astonishment. 'Hudibras in French! impossible—it cannot be!' I assured him that it was so, and

that I had the book. 'But how is it possible,' said he, 'to translate such a book? The rhymes, the wit, the jokes, are the material points of the work—and it is impossible to translate these—you cannot give *them* in French!' I told him that, strange as it might seem, they were very admirably preserved in the translation, the measure and versification being the same, and the point and spirit of the original maintained with the utmost fidelity. He seemed quite lost in wonder, and almost incredulous—repeating several times, 'Hudibras in French! Hudibras in French! Most extraordinary—I never heard of such a thing!' During the rest of our interview, he broke out occasionally with the same exclamations; and, as I took leave, he again asked me about the book. I said that it was rather scarce, as it had been published many years ago;* but, that I had a copy, which I should be happy to send him, if he would do me the honour of accepting it. Unfortunately, on my return to England, before I could find any body to take charge of it for him, he died."

The very capacity to appreciate "the rhymes, the wit, the jokes," of Hudibras, in itself implies no common mastery of English. How few even among learned Englishmen, could similarly appreciate Berni, Pulci, Scarron, or Gresset, not to speak of the minor humourists of France or Italy!

In all this, however, I have been anticipating. My own conversations with him, during my first visit to Rome, had but little reference to languages or to any kindred subject. He questioned me chiefly about our college, about the general condition of the Church in Ireland, and the relations of religious parties in Ireland and England. My sojourn in Rome occurred

* In 3 vols., 12mo., London, 1757. It contains the original and the translation in parallel pages. The author was Sieur Townley the well-known collector, and a member of the distinguished catholic family of that name. The translation is certainly most curiously exact in letter and in spirit, and fully deserves all that Mr. Badeley has said of it.

at a time of great religious excitement in the latter country. The Tractarian Movement had reached its highest point of interest. The secessions from the ranks of Anglicanism had already become so numerous as to attract the attention of foreign churches. The strong assertion of catholic principles brought out by the Hampden Controversy; the steady advance in tone which the successive issues of the Tracts for the Times, and still more of the "British Critic," had exhibited; above all, the almost complete identification in doctrine with the decrees of the Council of Trent, avowed in the celebrated Tract 90; had created everywhere a confident hope that many and extensive changes were imminent in England: and there were not a few among the best informed foreign Catholics, who were enthusiastic in their anticipation of the approaching reconciliation of that country with the Church. It was almost exclusively on this topic that Cardinal Mezzofanti spoke during my several interviews with him, in 1841. He was already well informed as to the general progress of the movement; but he enquired anxiously about individuals, and especially about the authors of the Tracts for the Times. I was much struck by the extent and the accuracy of his information on the subject, as well as by the justice of his views. He was well acquainted with the relations of the High and Low Church parties and with their history.

"Rest assured," he one day said to me, "that it is to individual conversions you are to look in England. There will be no general approximation of the

Churches. This is not the first time these principles have been popular for a while in the English Church. It was the same at the time of Laud, and again in the time of the Catholic King, James II. But no general movement followed. Many individuals became Catholics; but the mass of the public still remained Protestant, and were even more violent afterwards."

More than once during the many outbursts of fanaticism, which we have since that time witnessed in England, I have called to mind this wise and far-seeing prediction.

But, although the Cardinal did not partake in the anticipation, which some indulged, of a general movement of the English Church towards Rome, his interest in the conversion of individuals was most anxious and animated. It was his favourite subject of conversation with English visitors at this period. Mr. Grattan has kindly permitted me to copy from his journal an account of one of his interviews with the Cardinal, (a few months after this date) which describes a half serious, half jocular, attempt on the part of his Eminence to convert him from Protestantism. Mrs. Grattan, who is a Catholic, was present during the interview.

Having referred, in the course of a very interesting discussion on English literature, which the reader has already seen, to Sir Thomas More, as the earliest model of English prose, the Cardinal observed that More was a truly great and good man.

"'He made an enemy of his King,' said he, 'but he made a friend in his God.' He then inquired of Mrs. Grattan, how it

happened that I had not changed my religion, and become a Catholic—'Now-a-days,' said he, 'there is no penalty and no shame attached to the step; on the contrary, a great party in England esteem you the more for it, and many learned men of your own day have set you the example. You have, besides, the venerable Bede; you have St. Patrick, too—both the greatest of your countrymen in their age; you have King Alfred, and the Edwards, all inviting you to the Church.' He then approached me in the most affectionate manner, took my hand and pressed it, with a mixture of tenderness, drollery, and good nature. 'Now you *must* change,' he continued. 'You will not be able to escape it; your religion is but three hundred years old: the Catholic dates from the beginning of Christianity. It is the religion of Christ; its head on earth is the Pope—not, as yours once was, an old woman, but the Pope!' Here he became quite animated, took Mrs. Grattan's hand, and drew her over, holding each of us by the hand; his manner became most fervent, his old eye glistened, he looked up to Heaven, and exclaimed,—'There is the place to make a friend!' Then turning to me, he said, 'Ireland is the garden of religion, and you must one day become a flower in it.'"

Mr. Grattan was deeply affected by this remarkable interview; and I may add that I have known few Protestant visitors of the Cardinal, who did not carry away the most favourable impressions regarding him. With all the earnestness and fervour of his own religious convictions, he was singularly tolerant and forbearing towards the followers of another creed. "His gentleness and modesty," writes Chevalier (now Baron) Bunsen, "have often struck me. Once, some misrepresentations of Lady Morgan in her book on Italy, being mentioned in his presence with strong vituperation, he gently interposed. "Poor Lady Morgan!" said he; "it is not yet given to her to see truth."

But although in my conversations with the Cardinal in 1841, his Eminence confined himself entirely to English, yet on one occasion, at the close of a meeting of the Accademia della Cattolica Religione, I heard him converse, with every appearance of fluency and ease, in six different languages with the various members of a group who collected around him; in Romaic with Monsignor Missir, a Greek Archbishop; in German with Guido Görres; in Magyar with a Hungarian artist who accompanied him; in French with the Abbé La Croix, of the French church of St. Lewis; in Spanish with a young Spanish Dominican; and in English with myself and my companions. It was only however, during a second and more prolonged visit to Rome in the first six months of 1843, that I was witness, in its full reality, of the marvellous gift of which I had read and heard so much.

I was fortunate enough to arrive on Rome in the vigil of the great annual "Academy" of the Propaganda, which, from immemorial time has been held during the octave of the Epiphany, the special festival of that institution. It is hardly necessary, in speaking of an exercise now so celebrated, to explain that this Academy consists of a series of brief addresses and recitations, generally speaking in a metrical form, delivered by the students in all the various languages which happen at the time to be represented in the college. The subjects of these compositions are commonly drawn from the festival itself, or from some kindred theme; and the rapidity with which they succeed each other, and the ear-

nestness and vigour with which most of them are delivered, create an impression which hardly any other conceivable exhibition could produce. To the audience, of course, the greater number of these recitations are an unknown sound; but the earnest manner of the speakers; their foreign and unwonted intonations; the curious variety of feature and expression which they present; and the unique character of the whole proceeding—gave to the scene an interest entirely independent of the recitations themselves considered as literary compositions.

I never shall forget the impression which I received at my first entrance at the *Aula Maxima** on the evening of Sunday, January 8th, 1843. At the farther end of the hall, on an elevated platform, the benches of which rose above each other like the seats of a theatre, sat the assembled pupils, arranged with some view to effect, in the order in which they were to take part in the exercise. They seemed of all ages, from the dawn of youth to mature manhood. It would be difficult to find elsewhere collected together so many specimens of the minor varieties of the human race. Gazing upon the eager faces crowded within that little space, one might almost persuade himself that he had the whole world in miniature before him, with all its motley tribes and races—

> Che comprender non può prosa ne vérso:—
> Da India, dal Catai, Marrocco, e Spagna.

Some of the varieties, and perhaps those which present the most marked physiological contrasts with

* The exhibition at present, and for some years back, is held in the church of the Propaganda.

the rest, it is true; were wanting; but all the more delicate shades of difference were clearly discernable; the familiar lineaments of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon race; all the well-known European types of feature and complexion; the endless though highly contrasted varieties of Asiatic and North African form—the classic Indian, the stately Armenian, the calm and impassive Chaldee, the solemn Syrian, the fiery Arab, the crafty Egyptian, the swarthy Abyssinian, the stunted Birman, the stolid Chinese. And yet in all, far as they seemed asunder in sentient and intelligent qualities, might be traced the common interest of the occasion. Each appeared to feel that this—the feast of the illumination of the Gentiles—was indeed his own peculiar festival. All were lighted up by the excitement of the approaching exercise; and it was impossible, looking upon them, and recalling the object which had brought them all together from their distant homes, not to give glory to God for this, the most glorious work of his church: in which "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, speak the wonderful works of God;"—not, as of old, in one tongue, but each in the tongue of his own people.

Below the platform were arrayed the auditory. The front seats, distinguished by their red drapery, were reserved for the Cardinals, of whom several were present;—Franzoni, the Cardinal Prefect, with his

pale and passionless face—the very ideal of self-denying spirituality;—the English Cardinal Acton, shrinking, as it seemed, from the notice which his prominent position drew upon him—Castracane, Cardinal Penitentiary, with the look of earnest and settled purpose which he always wore;—the lively little Cardinal Massimo,* in animated and evidently pleasant conversation, with two of the Professors, the lamented abate Palma and abate Graziosi;—the classic head of Mai, every feature instinct with intellectuality—every look bespeaking the scholar and the priest. But it need scarcely be said, that on this evening, despite his scant proportions and unimposing presence, every other claimant for notice was forgotten in comparison with the true hero of such a scene—the great polyglot Cardinal Mezzofanti. He was seated on the extreme right of the front rank, and, as I entered, was conversing eagerly with a stately looking Greek bishop, Monsignor Missir, whose towering stature and singularly noble head contrasted strongly with the diminutive and almost insignificant figure of the great linguist.

Behind the Cardinals sate a number of foreign bishops, prelates, members of religious orders, and other distinguished strangers, many of them evidently orientals. The general assembly at the back included

* Of the princely house of Massimo, which is said to claim descent from the great *Cunctator*. The marked contrast between the diminutive stature of the Cardinal, and the noble and commanding figure of the Prince, his elder brother, gave occasion to one of those lively *mots* for which Rome is celebrated. The brothers were called, "Il Principe *Massimo*, ed il Cardinal *Menomo*."

most of the literary foreigners then in Rome, among whom were more than one English clergyman, at that time the object of many an anxious prayer and aspiration, of which we have since been permitted to witness the happy fulfilment in their accession to the fold of the Church.

The exercises of the evening, besides a Latin proem and an epilogue in Italian, comprised forty-eight recitations on "the Illumination of the Gentiles;" but, as these included several varieties of Latin and Italian versification, the total number of languages represented in the Academy was only forty-two. The Latin proem was delivered by a young Irish student from the centre of the platform; the other speakers delivering their parts from the places assigned to them by the programme. Most of the languages were spoken by natives of the several countries where they prevail; and, where no native representative could be found, a student remarkable for his proficiency in the language was selected instead. It thus happened that the Hebrew psalm was recited by a Dutchman; the Spanish ode fell to a native of Stockholm; and the soft measures of the Italian *terzine* and anacreontics were committed to the tender mercies of two youths from beyond the Tweed!

With those of the odes which I was in some degree able to follow, the Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, and German, I was much pleased. They appeared to me remarkably simple, elegant, and in good taste. But for the rest, it would be idle to attempt to convey an idea of the strange effect produced by the rapid succession of unknown sounds, uttered with every diversity of

intonation,* accompanied by every variety of gesture, and running through every interval in the musical scale, from "syllables which breathe of the soft south," to the

> Harsh northern whistling, grunting, guttural,
> That we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

Some of the recitations were singularly soft and harmonious; some came, even upon an uninstructed ear, with a force and dignity. almost independent of the sense which they conveyed; some on the contrary, especially when taken in connexion with the gestures and intonation of the reciter, were indescribably ludicrous. Among the former was the Syriac ode, recited by Joseph Churi, a youth since known in English literature. Among the latter, the most curious were a Chinese Eclogue, and a Peguan Dialogue. The speakers in both cases were natives, and I was assured by a gentleman who was present at the exercise, and who had visited China more than once, that their recitation was a perfect reproduction of the tone and manner of the native theatre of China.

Throughout the entire proceedings Cardinal Mezzofanti was a most attentive, and evidently an anxious listener. Every one of the young aspirants to public favour was personally and familiarly known to

* These were (1,) Hebrew; (2,) Syriac; (3,) Samaritan; (4,) ancient Chaldee; (5,) Modern Chaldee; (6,) Arabic; (7,) ancient Armenian; (8,) modern Armenian; (9,) Turkish; (10,) Persian; (11,) Albanian; (12,) Sabean;—a dialect of Syriac, which Adelung prefers to call Zabian;—(13,) Maltese; (14,) Greek; (15,) Romaic; (16,) Ethiopic; (17,) Coptic; (18,) Amarina; (19,) Tamul; (20,) Koordish; (21,) Kunkan,—one of the dialects of the Bengal coast;—(22,) Georgian; (23,) Welsh; (24,) Irish; (25,) Gælic;

him. Many of the pieces, moreover, upon these occasions, were his own composition, or at least revised by him; and thus, besides his paternal anxiety for the success of his young friends, he generally had somewhat of the interest of an author in the literary part of the performance. It was plain, too, that, for the young speakers themselves, his Eminence was, in his turn, the principal object of consideration; and it was amusing to observe, in the case of one of the oriental recitations, that the speaker almost appeared to forget the presence of the general auditory, and to address himself entirely to the spot where Cardinal Mezzofanti sate.

At the close of the exercises, as soon as the interesting assemblage of the platform broke up, a motley group was speedily formed around the good-natured Cardinal, to hear his criticisms, or to receive his congratulations on the performance; and I then was witness for the first time of what I saw on more than one subsequent occasion—the almost inconceivable versatility of his wonderful faculty, and his power of flying from language to language with the rapidity of thought itself, as he was addressed in each in

(26,) English; (27,) Illyrian; (28,) Bulgarian; (29,) Polish; (30,) Peguan; (31,) Swedish; (32,) ancient German; (33,) modern German; (34,) Swiss German; (35,) Dutch; (36,) Spanish; (39,) Catalan; (38,) Portuguese; (39,) French; (40,) ancient Chinese; (41,) Chinese of Tchang-si; (42,) Chinese of Canton.

I was somewhat surprised to miss Russian from the catalogue. In the Academy of the present year, it appears in its proper place. See "Academia Poliglotta nel Collegio Urbano de Prop. Fide, per l'Epifania del 1858," p. 38.

succession;—hardly ever hesitating, or ever confounding a word or interchanging a construction. Most of the members of the polyglot group which thus crowded around him and plied him with this linguistic fusilade, were of course unknown to me; but I particularly noticed among the busiest of the questioners, the Chinese youths who had taken part in their native eclogue, and a strange, mercurial, monkey-like, but evidently most intelligent lad, whom I afterwards recognized as one of the speakers in the Peguan Dialogue.* I was gratified, too, to see a gap which I had observed in the programme of the exercises—the omission of the Russian language—supplied by his Eminence in this curious after-performance. A Russian gentleman, who had sate near me during the evening, now joined the group assembled around the Cardinal, and good-humouredly complained of the oversight. His Eminence, without a moment's thought, replied to him in Russian;—in which language a lengthened conversation ensued between them, with every evidence of ease and fluency on the part of the Cardinal. Although I have never since learned the name of this traveller, I noted the circumstance with peculiar interest at the time, because he had already established a claim upon my remembrance, by selecting (without knowing me as an Irishman,) among all the recitations of

* This youth, as I afterwards learned, was called by the strange name, Moses Ngnau. He was a native of Pegu, and returned to his own mission in 1850; but unhappily his career was terminated by an early death.

the evening, as especially harmonious and expressive in its sounds, the *Irish Ode;* which had been delivered with great character and effect by a young student of the County Mayo.

During my first visit to Rome, I had heard a great deal of this curious power of maintaining a conversation simultaneously with several individuals, and in many different languages; but I was far from being prepared for an exhibition of it so wonderful as that which I have witnessed. I cannot, at this distance of time, say what was the exact number of the group which stood around him, nor can I assert that they all spoke different languages; but making every deduction, the number of speakers cannot have been less than ten or twelve; and I do not think that he once hesitated for a sentence or even for a word! Many very wonderful examples of the power of dividing the attention between different objects have been recorded. Julius Cæsar, if we believe Pliny, was able to listen with his ears, read with his eyes, write with his pen, and dictate with his lips, at the same time. Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, often dictated to six or seven secretaries simultaneously. Walter Scott, when engaged in his Life of Napoleon, used to dictate fluently to his amanuensis, while he was, at the same time, taking down and reading books, consulting papers, and comparing authorities on the difficult points of the history which were to follow. The wonderful powers of the same kind possessed by Phillidor, the chess-player, too, are

well known.* But I cannot think that there is any example of the faculty of mental self-multiplication, if it can be thus called, upon record, so wonderful as that exhibited by Mezzofanti in these, so to speak, linguistic tournaments, in which he held the lists against all opponents, not successively, but at once. Guido Görres, describing the rapidity of his transitions from one language to another, compares it to "a bird flitting from spray to spray." The learned Armenian, Father Arsenius, speaking of the perfect distinctness of his use of each, and of the entire absence of confusion or intermixture, says his change from language to language "was like passing from one room into another." "Mezzofanti himself told me," writes Cardinal Wiseman, "that whenever he began to speak in one tongue, or turned into it from another, he seemed to forget all other languages except that one. He has illustrated to me the difficulty he had to encounter in these transitions, by taking a common word, such as 'bread,' and giving it in several cognate languages, as Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Hungarian, &c., the differences being very slight, and difficult to remember. Yet he never made the least mistake in any of them."

When Rev. John Strain, now of St. Andrew's, Dumfries, who assures me that, while he was in

* The journals of this week, (March 18,) relate a most astonishing feat of the great modern chess-player, Dr. Harwitz. He has just played three games simultaneously, against three most eminent players, without once seeing any of the boards, or even entering the room in which the moves were made, during the entire time! He won two of the games—the third being a drawn one.

the Propaganda, he often heard Mezzofanti speak seven or eight languages in the course of half an hour, asked him how it was that he never jumbled or confused them. Mezzofanti laughingly asked in his turn.

"Have you ever *tried on a pair of green spectacles ?*"

" Yes," replied his companion.

" Well," said Mezzofanti, " while you wore these spectacles everything was green to your eyes. It is precisely so with me. While I am speaking any language, for instance, Russian, *I put on my Russian spectacles*, and for the time, *they colour everything Russian.* I see all my ideas in that language alone. If I pass to another language, *I have only to change the spectacles, and it is the same for that language also!*"

This amusing illustration perfectly describes the phenomenon so far as it fell under observation ; but, so far as I am aware, no one has attempted to analyse the mental operation by which these astounding external effects were produced. The faculty, whatever it was, may have been improved and sharpened by exercise ; but there is no part of the extraordinary gift of this great linguist so clearly exceptional, and so unprecedented in the history of the faculty of language.

A few weeks after the Propaganda academy, I met his Eminence at the levee of the newly created Cardinal Cadolini, ex-Secretary of the Sacred Congregation. Recognizing me at once as " the Maynooth Professor," he addressed me laughingly in Irish :

Cɹoŋuɹ tá tú ? "How are you?" It has repeatedly been stated that he knew Irish ; and that language is actually enumerated in more than one published list of the languages which he spoke. Had it not been for his own candour on the occasion in question, I myself should have carried away the same impression from our interview. But on my declaring my inability to enter into an Irish conversation, he at once confessed that, had I been able to go farther, I should have found himself at fault; as, although he knew so much as enabled him to initiate a conversation, and to make his way through a book, he had not formally studied the Irish language. Nevertheless that he was acquainted with its general characteristics, and the leading principles of its inflections and grammatical structure, its analogies with Gælic, as well as their leading points of difference, and its general relations with the common Celtic family, I was enabled to ascertain in a subsequent interview, in which I was accompanied by an accomplished Irish scholar, the late Rev. Dr. Murphy of Kinsale. Dr. Murphy was much struck with the accuracy and soundness of his views.

One of the observations which he made during this interview was afterwards the occasion of no little amusement to us. During an audience which Dr. Murphy, accompanied by Dr. Cullen, then Rector of the Irish College, had had a few days before with the Pope, Gregory XVI., a new work of Sir William Betham, *Etruria Celtica*—in which an attempt is made to establish the identity of the Irish and Etrurian languages, and in which the

celebrated Eugubian inscriptions are explained as Irish,—had been presented to the Pope. His holiness, who was much interested in Etruscan antiquities, on hearing from Dr. Cullen the nature and object of the work, had expressed great amusement at this latest discovery in a matter which had already been explained in at least a dozen different and conflicting ways. We mentioned this to the Cardinal.

"His Holiness is perfectly right," he replied. "There is no possible meaning which could not be taken out of it, if you only grant the licence which these antiquarians claim. The Eugubian tables, in different systems,* have been explained by some as a calendar of Festivals; by others as a code of laws; by others as a system of agricultural precepts. It is no wonder that your Irish author explains them as Irish. But I will venture to say that, if you only take any common Italian or Latin sentence, and apply to it the same system of interpretation, you may explain it as Irish, and find it make excellent sense."

On leaving his Eminence, we resolved to put his suggestion to the test. We took the first sentence in the first of F. Segneri's sermons which opened in the volume. I have since tried, but in vain, to find the passage: and I only recollect about it, that it related to the ardent desire of our Divine Lord, that the light of his gospel should shine among men. Dr.

* The most recent information regarding this curious subject is contained in a report by Dr. Aufrecht, which Bunsen has printed in his Christianity and Mankind, III., p. 87, and foll; See also Mommsen's Unter-italische Dialekten.

Murphy, without exceeding in the slightest degree the license which Sir W. Betham allows himself, in dealing with the Eugubian inscriptions, converted this Italian sentence into an Irish one, which, to our infinite amusement, literally rendered, ran as follows: "In sailing into the harbour, they came to the place of his habitation; and *they took a vast quantity of large specked trouts, by the great virtue of white Irish fishing-rods!*"

The Cardinal repeated to Dr. Murphy during this visit what he had before said, that he did not pretend to speak Irish, but added that, if he had a little practice, he would easily acquire it. I had already heard the same from the Archbishop of Tuam, who knew him on his first arrival in Rome. I have since been told that, in the following winter, he formally addressed himself to the study, with the assistance of the late Rev. Dr. Lyons of Erris, who was then in Rome; but I have no means of testing the truth of the statement, or of ascertaining the extent of his progress.

This discussion regarding the Irish language naturally suggested a similar inquiry as to the Cardinal's knowledge of the kindred Gælic. The Rev. John Strain, who knew him in 1832, when he first came to Rome, informs me that in that year he had no knowledge whatever of the Gælic language. He got a friend of Mr. Strain's to repeat some sentences in it for him, and expressed a wish to procure some books for the purpose of learning it. I find from the catalogue of his library that he did procure a few Gælic books: and Rev. John Gray of Glasgow, who was a

student of the Propaganda till the year 1841, informs me that he at that time knew the language, but spoke it very imperfectly.*

An American gentleman whom I met one day in the Cardinal's ante-chamber, showed me an impromptu English couplet which his eminence had just written for him, on his asking for some memorial of their interview. I am not able now to recall this distich to memory; but it is only one of numberless similar tokens which the Cardinal presented to his visitors and friends. One of his favourite amusements consisted in improvising little scraps of verse in various languages, for the most part embodying some pious or moral sentiment, which he flung off with the rapidity of thought, and without the slightest effort. Few of those which I have seen, indeed, can be said to exhibit much poetical genius. There is but little trace of imagination in them, and the sentiments, though excellent, are generally commonplace enough. But while, considered as a test of command over the languages in which they are written, even the most worthless of them cannot be regarded as insignificant, there are many of them which are very prettily turned, and display no common power of versification.

It is difficult to recover scraps like these, fragmentary of their own nature, and scattered over every country of the earth. I have sought in vain for oriental specimens, although the Cardinal distributed numbers of them to the students of the Propaganda at their leaving college. In a sheet of autographs prefixed to this volume will be found verses in sixteen

* Letter of January 15, 1857.

different languages. A few others are given in the appendix. I shall jot down here two or three specimens of his classical epigrams which have fallen in my way.

Most of them arose out of the very circumstance of his being asked for such a token of remembrance.

For instance, on one occasion when the request was addressed to him *in Greek*, he wrote :

Ἑλλάδος ἠρώτας ἐμε ῥήμασιν. Ἑλλάδος ἀυδήν
Ἐκχέω, ἐὸ' ἄλλην χρή ἀπαμειβόμενον.
Οὐ φθόγγος φθόγγοισιν ἀμείβεται, εἰ μὴ ὁμοῖος,
Ἀλλ' ἀπο συμφώνων γίγνεται ἁρμονίη.
Νῦν δέ τίνα Γνώμην δώσω ἀιτᾶντι ; τεν ἄλλην
Ἡ—Θεὸν ἐν πάσῃ δεῖ φιλεῖειν κραδίῃ.'

So again, when a visitor begged him to write *his name* in an album, he gave, instead, this pretty couplet.

Pauca dedi—nomen. Tu sane pauca petisti,
Assiduus sed ego te rogo plura—preces.

In answer to a similar request at another time, he replied—

Accipe quod poscis—nomen. Scribatur ut ipsum
In cœlo, ad Dominum tu bone funde preces.

On being presented on New Year's-day with a pair of spectacles by his friend, Dr. Peter Trombetti, of Bologna, he wrote :—

Deficit heu acies oculorum ; instante seneeta !
Deficit;—at comis lumina tu duplicas.
Lumen utrumque mihi argento dum nocte coruscat
Haud mihi qui dederit decidet ex animo.

A similar present at the next New Year elicited the following :—

Cum vix sufficiunt oculi mihi nocte legenti,
Ecce bonus rursum lumina tu geminas.
Prospera ut eveniant multis volventibus annis,
Cuncta tibi, par est me geminare preces.

To another of his Bolognese friends, the Canonico Tartaglia, now rector of the Pontifical seminary, who begged some memorial, he sent the following pretty epigram :—

Sæpe ego versiculos heic dicto, stans pede in uno ;
Carmina sed fingo nulla linenda cedro.
Qualiacumque cano velox heu dissipat aura !
Unum de innumeris hoc mihi vix superest,
Mittimus hoc unum interea. Exiguum accipe donum
Eternæ veteris pignus amicitiæ.

Any one who has ever tried to turn a verse in any foreign tongue, will agree with me in regarding the rapidity with which these trifles were written, as one of the most curious evidences of the writer's mastery over the many languages in which he is known to have indulged this fancy. The really pretty Dutch verses—verses as graceful in sentiment as they are elegant in language—in reply to Dr. Wap's address, were penned in Dr. Wap's presence and with great rapidity. Father Legrelle's Flemish verses were dashed off with equal quickness. The American of whom I spoke told me that the Cardinal wrote almost without a moment's thought. It was the same for the lady mentioned by Dr. Wap, although the subject of these verses arose during the interview ; and even

the Persian stanza which he wrote for Dr. Tholuck, and which "contained several pretty ἐνθυμήσεις," cost him only about half an hour! How many of those who consider themselves most perfect in French, Italian, or German, have ever ventured even upon a single line of poetry in any of them?

I must not omit another circumstance which I myself observed, and which struck me forcibly as illustrating the singular nicety of his ear, and still more the completeness with which he threw himself into all the details of every language which he cultivated;—I mean his manner and accent in pronouncing Latin in conversation with natives of different countries. One day I was speaking to him in company with Guido Görres, when he had occasion to quote to me Horace's line.

Si paulum a summo decessit, vergit ad imum:—

which he pronounced quite as I should have pronounced it, and without any of the peculiarities of Italian pronunciation. He turned at once to Görres, and added—

"Or, as you would say:

Si *pow*lum a *soomm*o *det*sessit, ver*ghit* ad imum,

introducing into it every single characteristic of the German manner of pronouncing the Latin language. I have heard the same from other foreigners. It was amusing, too, to observe that he had taken the trouble to note and to acquire the peculiar expletive or interjectional sounds, with which, as it is well known, natives of different countries unconsciously interlard their conversation, and the absence or misuse

of which will sometimes serve to discover the foreign origin of one who seems to speak a language with every refinement of correctness.* The Englishman's "ah!" the Frenchman's "oh!" the whistling interjection of the Neapolitan, the grunt of the Turk, the Spaniard's nasal twang—were all at his command.

My brief and casual intercourse with the Cardinal would not entitle me to speak of his character and disposition, were it not that my impressions are but an echo of all that has been said and written before me, of his cheerful courtesy, his open-hearted frankness, and his unaffected good nature. To all his visitors of whatever degree, he was the same—gay, amiable, and unreserved. With him humility was an instinct. It seemed as though he never thought of himself, or of any claim of his to consideration. He would hardly permit the simple mark of respect—the kissing of the ring which ordinarily accompanies the salutation of one of high ecclesiastical dignity in Italy; and his demeanour was so entirely devoid of assumption of superiority that the humblest visitor was at once made to feel at home in his company.

*Cardinal Wiseman told me of a priest who, after having lived for twenty years in France, was mortified to find himself discovered as an Englishman, by the way in which he said "ah!" in expression of his acknowledgment of an answer given to him by a person to whom he addressed a question in a crowd. This may explain an anecdote in Moore's Diary, which he could not himself understand. A lady was coming in to dinner, and, on her passing through the ante-room, where Talleyrand was standing, he looked up and exclaimed insignificantly "ah!" In the course of the dinner, the lady, having asked him across the table why he had uttered the exclamation of "oh"! on her

His conversation was uniformly gay and cheerful, and no man entered more heartily into the spirit of any little pleasantry which might arise. On one occasion, upon a melting summer day, as he was shewing the magnificent Giulio Clovio Dante, in the Vatican library, to a well-known London clergyman, the latter, in his delight at one of the beautiful miniatures by which it is illustrated—a moonlight scene—was in the act of pointing out *with his moist finger* some particular beauty which struck him, when Mezzofanti, horror-struck at the danger, caught his arm.

"Softly, my dear Doctor," he playfully interposed: "these things may be looked at with the eyes, but not with the fingers."

He delighted, too, in puns, and was equally ready in all languages. He laughed heartily at Cardinal Rivarola's Italian pun against himself, about the *orecchini*;* and one day, while he was speaking German with Guido Görres, the latter having made some allusion to his Eminence's increasing gray hairs, and spoken of him as a *weiss-haar* (white-haired,)

entrance, Talleyrand, with a grave self-vindicatory look, answered; *Madame, je n'ai pas dit* oh! *j'ai dit* ah, (*Memoirs VII., p. 5*)

One of the standing jokes against the capuchins in Italy is about an "alphabet" which they are supposed to learn during the noviciate, and which consists exclusively of the interjection *O!*—which single sound, by the varieties of look, gesture, air, and expression which accompany it, is made to embody almost every conceivable meaning.

Much light is thrown on more than one obscure passage in the Latin classics by the gesticulations which still prevail in modern Italy, especially in Naples. See the Canon De Jorio's extremely curious and learned book, "Mimica degli Antichi investigata nel Gestire Napolitano."

* Supra. p. 379.

"Ach !" he replied with a gentle smile, not untinged with melancholy ;—" ach ! gäbe Gott dass ich, wie *weiss-haar*, so auch *weiser* geworden wäre.*

It will easily be inferred from this, that, among etymologies, he was especially attracted by those which involved a play upon words :—if they admitted a pun so much the better. He was much amused by Herr Fleck's suggestion, that the name Mezzofanti, was derived from Ἐν μέσῳ φαίνεται ; and Cardinal Wiseman told me that once, after learnedly canvassing the various etymologies suggested for Felsina, the ancient name of his native city, Bologna, he laughingly brought the discussion to a close by suggesting that probably it was *Fé l'asina*, (the ass made it.)

Probably it was to this taste he was indebted for that familiarity with Hudibras—a writer, otherwise so unattractive to a foreigner—which took Mr. Badeley by surprise.

* The pun is less observable in writing than in speaking ; the words *weiss-haar* and *weiser* resemble each other more closely in sound, than in appearance. It might be rendered :

" Would to God, that, as I have become *whiter*, so I had also grown *wiser* !"

CHAPTER XVI

[1843-1849.]

In the midst of the honours and occupations of his new dignity, Cardinal Mezzofanti sustained a severe affliction in the death of his favourite nephew, Monsignor Minarelli—the *Giuseppino* (Joe) so often commemorated in his early correspondence. This amiable and learned ecclesiastic instead of accompanying his uncle to Rome, where the most brilliant prospects were open to him, preferred to pursue the quiet and useful career of university life, in which he had hitherto been associated with him in Bologna. By successive steps, he had risen to the Rectorate of the University; and in recognition of his services to that institution, the honorary dignity of a prelate of the first class in the Roman Court—popularly styled *del mantelletto*—had been conferred on him by the Pope. The Cardinal, as is plain from his own letters and those of his Bologna friends, was warmly attached to him. While he lived in Bologna Giuseppe was his friend and companion, rather than his pupil; and the young man's early death was felt

the more deeply by him, from the congeniality of tastes and studies which had always subsisted between them.

The Cardinal's sister, Teresa, (mother of the deceased prelate,) although she was ten years his senior, was still living in their old home at Bologna, and he continued to correspond with her up to the time of his death. His letters to her are all exceedingly simple and unaffected—so entirely of a domestic character, and without public interest, that, if I translate one of them here—the latest which has come into my hands —it is merely as a specimen of the warmth and tenderness, as well as deeply religious character of the Cardinal's affection for his sister and for her children.

"We are on the eve of your Saint's Day, my dearest sister. I am to say Mass on that day in the Church of the Servites; but I shall offer it for you, praying with all the fervor of my heart that God may long preserve you in health, and console you under your affliction, and that your holy patroness may protect you, and obtain for you all the graces of which you stand in need. I wish to mark the occasion by a little token of my affection, and I have already written to Gesnalde to transmit it to you. It is a mere trifle, but I know that you will only look, as you have always done in past years, to the person it comes from, and that you will give it value by accepting it, and by corresponding with me in recommending me, as I do you, to the special favour of the Almighty. As being my elder sister, you used always, when we were children, to pray for your little brother; and I know that you still continue the practice; I am most grateful for it, and I try to make you every return.

Your sons, and my niece Anna unite with me in their affectionate wishes, and beg your blessing. May God bestow his most abundant blessings on you!"

The history of the later years of the Cardinal's life

presents scarcely any incidents of any special interest. Few of the reports of the foreigners who met him at this period, differ in any material particulars from those which we have already seen. I shall content myself, therefore, with two or three of them, which may be taken as specimens of the entire, but which are selected also with a view to serve in guiding the reader in his estimate, not merely of the general attainments of the Cardinal as a linguist, but of his proficiency in the languages of the writers themselves, and in other languages, not specially commemorated hitherto.

We have already passingly alluded to the account of Mezzofanti given by the Rev. Ingraham Kip, a clergyman of the Episcopalian Church in America: but the details into which this gentleman enters, regarding his Eminence's knowledge of the English language and literature, are so important, that it would be unpardonable to pass them by.

"He is a small lively looking man," says Mr. Kip, "apparently over seventy. He speaks English with a slight foreign accent—yet remarkably correct. Indeed, I never before met with a foreigner who could talk for ten minutes without using some word with a shade of meaning not exactly right; yet, in the *long conversation I had with the Cardinal, I detected nothing like this. He did not use a single expression or word in any way which was not strictly and idiomatically correct.* He converses, too, without the slightest hesitation, never being at the least loss for the proper phrase.

In talking about him some time before to an ecclesiastic, I quoted Lady Blessington's remark, 'that she did not believe he had made much progress in the literature of these forty-two languages; but was rather like a man who spent his time in manufacturing keys to palaces which he had not time to enter;' and I inquired whether this was true. 'Try him,' said he,

laughing; and, having now the opportunity, I endeavoured to do so. I led him, therefore, to talk of Lord Byron and his works, and then of English literature generally. He gave me, in the course of his conversation, quite a discussion on the subject which was the golden period of the English language; and of course fixed on the days of Addison. He drew a comparison between the characteristics of the French, Italian, and Spanish languages; spoke of Lockhart's translation from the Spanish, and incidentally referred to various other English writers. He then went on to speak of American literature, and paid high compliments to the pure style of some of our best writers. He expressed an opinion that, with many, it had been evidently formed by a careful study of the old authors—those 'wells of English undefiled'—and, that within the last fifty years we had imported fewer foreign words than had been done in England. He spoke very warmly of the works of Mr. Fennimore Cooper, whose name, by the way, is better known on the continent than that of any other American author."

As Mr. Kip, unfortunately, was not acquainted with any of the Indian languages of North America, he was unable to test the extent of the Cardinal's attainments in these languages. His account, nevertheless, is not without interest.

"In referring to our Indian languages, he remarked, that the only one with which he was well acquainted was the Algonquin, although he knew something of the Chippewa and Delaware; and asked whether I understood Algonquin; I instantly disowned any knowledge of the literature of that respectable tribe of Savages; for I was afraid the next thing would be a proposal that we should continue the conversation in their mellifluous tongue. He learned it from an Algonquin missionary, who returned to Rome, and lived just long enough to enable the Cardinal to begin this study. He had read the works of Mr. Du Ponceau* of Philadelphia, on the subject of Indian languages, and spoke very highly of them."

* This is a mistake. The work published at Philadelphia is not a general treatise on the Indian Languages, but a Grammar of the

It is right to add Mr. Kip's conclusions from the entire interview, and his impressions regarding the natural and acquired powers of the great linguist.

"And yet," he concludes, "*all this conversation by no means satisfied me* of the depth of the Cardinal's literary acquirements. There was nothing said which gave evidence of more than a superficial acquaintance with English literature; the kind of knowledge which passes current in society, and which is necessarily picked up by one who meets so often with cultivated people of each country. His acquirements in words are certainly wonderful; but I could not help asking myself their use. I have never yet heard of their being of any practical benefit to the world during the long life of their possessor. He has never displayed anything philosophical in his character of mind; none of that power of combination which enables Schlegel to excel in all questions of philology, and gives him a talent for discriminating and a power of handling the resources of a language which have never been surpassed."*

Perhaps the reader will be disposed to regard Mr. Kip's criticism as somewhat *exigeant* in its character; and to think that, even taking his own report of his conversation with the Cardinal, and of the number and variety of the English and American writers, with whom, and with whose peculiar characteristics, he was acquainted—some of them, moreover—as for example, Lockhart's Spanish Ballads—a translation

Lenni-Lennape Language nor is it an original work of Du Ponceau: but a translation by him, with notes, from the German MS. of David Zeisberger. It is in 4to. and was published at Philadelphia in 1827. Du Ponceau's own work on the Indian languages, was published in Paris, 8vo. 1838.

* Christmas holidays in Rome, by the Rev. Ingraham Kip.

from a foreign language—most unlikely to attract a "superficial" foreigner, he was a little unreasonable in refusing "to be satisfied with the depth of the Cardinal's literary acquirements." For my part, I cannot help thinking this interview, even as recorded by Mr. Kip, one of the most astonishing incidents in the entire history of this extraordinary man. And I may add to what is here stated of his familiarity with the principal English authors, native and American, that, as I am informed by the Rev. Mr. Gray, of Glasgow, the Cardinal was also intimately acquainted with the national literature of Scotland; that he had read many of the works of Walter Scott and Burns; and that he understood and was able to enjoy the Lowland Scottish dialect, which is one of the great charms of both.

Mr. Kip's impressions as to the Cardinal's want of skill in the science of language and of its philosphical bearing on history and ethnology, must be admitted to have more foundation, and are shared by several of the scholars who visited him, especially those who cultivated ethnology as a particular study. I have reserved for this place a short notice of the Cardinal, which has been communicated to me by Baron Bunsen, and which, while it does ample justice to Mezzofanti's merits as a linguist, puts a very low estimate on his accomplishments as a philologer, and a critic. The reader will gather from much of what has been already said, that I am far from adopting this estimate in several of its particulars; but Baron Bunsen's opinion upon any question of

scholarship or criticism is too important to be overlooked.

"I saw him first as Abate and Librarian at Bologna, in 1828, when travelling through Italy, with the Crown Prince (now King) of Prussia. When he came to Rome as head librarian to the Vatican, I have frequently had the pleasure of seeing him in my house, and in the Vatican. He was always amiable, humane, courteous, and spoke with equal fluency the different languages of Europe. His gentleness and modesty have often struck me. Once, when some misrepresentations of Lady Morgan in her book on Italy, were mentioned before him with very strong vituperation, 'Poor Lady Morgan!' he said, 'it is not yet given to her to see truth.' When complimented by an English lady upon his miraculous facility in acquiring languages, with the additional observation that Charles the Fifth had said, 'as many languages as a man knows, so many times he is a man,' he replied, 'Well, that ought rather to humble us; for it is essential to man to err, and therefore, such a man is the more liable to error, if Charles the Fifth's observation is true.'

On the other side, I must confess that I was always struck by the observation of an Italian who answered to the question: 'Non è miracoloso di vedere un uomo parlare quaranta due lingue?' replied, 'Si, senza dubbio; ma più miracoloso ancora è di sentire che questo uomo in quaranta due lingue non dice *niente*.' A giant as a linguist, Mezzofanti certainly was a child as a philologer and philological critic.

He delighted in etymologies, and sometimes he mentioned new and striking ones, particularly as to the Romanic languages and their dialects. But he could not draw any philosophical or historical consequences from that circumstance, beyond the first self-evident elements. He had no idea of philosophical grammar. I have once seen his attempt at decyphering a Greek inscription, and never was there such a failure. Nor has he left or published anything worth notice.

I explain this by his ignorance of all *realities*. He remembered words and their sounds and significations almost instinctively;

but he lived upon reminiscences: he never had an original thought. I understood from one of his learned colleagues, (a Roman Prelate,) that it was the same with his theology; there was no acuteness in his divinity, although he knew well St. Thomas and other scholastics.

As to Biblical Criticism, he had no idea of it. His knowledge of Greek criticism too was very shallow.

In short, his linguistic talent was that of seizing sounds and accents, and the whole (so to say) idiom of a language, and reproducing them by a wonderful, but equally special, memory.

I do not think he had ever his equal in this respect.

But the cultivation of this power had absorbed all the rest.

Let it, however, never be forgotten that he was, according to all I have heard from him, a charitable, kind Christian, devout but not intolerant, and that his habitual meekness was not a cloak, but a real Christian habit and virtue. Honour be to his memory."

There is a part of this criticism which is unquestionably just: but there are also several of the views from which I am bound to dissent most strongly, and to which I shall have occasion to revert hereafter. Meanwhile, that the Cardinal paid more attention to these inquiries than Mr. Kip and M. Bunsen suppose, will appear from the testimony of the Abbé Gaume, author of the interesting work, "*Les Trois Rome.*"

"I had often met the illustrious philologer," says M. Gaume, "at the Propaganda, where he used to come to spend the afternoon. Kind, affable, modest, he mixed with the students, and spoke by turns Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Chinese, and twenty other languages, with a facility almost prodigious When I entered, I found him studying Bas-Breton, and I have no doubt that in a short time he will be able to exhibit it to the inhabitants of Vannes themselves. His eminence assured me of two points. The first is the fundamental unity of all languages. This unity is observable especially in the parts of speech, which are the same or nearly so in all languages. The second is the trinity of dialects

in the primitive language;—a trinity corresponding with the three races of mankind. The Cardinal has satisfied himself that there are but three races sprung from one common stock, as there are but three languages or principal dialects of one primitive language;—the Japhetic language and race; the Semitic language and race; and the Chamitic language and race. Thus the unity of the human kind and the trinity of races, which are established by all the monuments of history, are found also to be supported by the authority of the most extraordinary philologer that has even been known.

The Cardinal's testimony is the more important inasmuch as his linguistic acquirements are not confined to a superficial knowledge. Of the many languages which he possesses, there is not one in which he is not familiar with the every day words, common sayings, adages, and all that difficult nomenclature which constitutes the popular part of a language. One day he asked one of our friends to what province of France he belonged. 'To Burgundy;' replied my friend. 'Oh!' said Mezzofanti, 'you have two Burgundian dialects; which of them do you speak?' 'I know,' replied our friend, 'the patois of Lower Burgundy.' Whereupon the Cardinal began to talk to him in Lower Burgundian, with a fluency which the vine-dressers of Nantes or Beaune might envy."*

This curious familiarity with provincial *patois*, described by the Abbé Gaume, extended to the other provincial dialects of France. M. Manavit found him not only acquainted with the Tolosan dialect, but even not unread in its local literature. His library contains books in the dialects of Lorraine, Bearne, Franche Comté, and Dauphiné. I have already mentioned his speaking Provençal with Madame de Chaussegros; and Dr. Grant, bishop of Southwark, told me that he was able, solely by the

* Gaume, Les Trois Rome, II. 413-4.

accent of the Abbé Carbry, to determine the precise place of his nativity, Montauban.

Another language regarding which, although it has more than once been alluded to, few testimonies have as yet been brought forward, is Spanish. I shall content myself, nevertheless, with the evidence of a single Spaniard, which, brief as it is, leaves nothing to be desired. "I can assert of his Eminence," writes Father Diego Burrueco, a Trinitarian of Zamora, who knew the Cardinal during many of these years, "that he spoke our Spanish like a native of Castile. He could converse in the Andalusian dialect with Andalusians; he was able, also, to distinguish the Catalonian dialect from that of Valencia, and both from that of the Island of Majorca."* We have already seen that, at a very early period of his life, he studied the Mexican, Peruvian, and other languages of Spanish America. That he spoke both Mexican and Peruvian after he came to Rome, Cardinal Wiseman has no doubt. He is also stated to have learned something of the languages of Oceanica from Bishop Pompalier, of New Zealand. I may add here, though I have failed in finding native witnesses, that it is the universal belief in Rome that he spoke well both ancient and modern Chaldee, and ancient Coptic, as also the modern dialect of Egypt. He had the repute also of being thoroughly familiar with both branches of the Illyrian family—the Slavonic and the Romanic. To the testimonies already borne to his skill in Armenian and Turkish, I must add that of the Mechitarist, Father Raphael Trenz, Superior of the Armenian College in Paris, who

* Letter of November 9, 1855.

knew him in 1846. "Having conversed with his Eminence," writes this father, *"in ancient and in modern Armenian, and also in Turkish, I am able to attest that he spoke and pronounced them all with the purity and propriety of a native of these countries."

Perhaps also, although we have had many notices of his skill in Russian and Polish from a very early period, it may be satisfactory to subjoin the reports of one or two travellers who conversed with him in these languages during his latter years.

To begin with Russian. A traveller of that nation who twice visited him about this time, cited by Mr. Watts, describes him as "a phenomenon as yet unparalleled in the literary world, and one that will scarce be repeated, unless the gift of tongues be given anew, as at the dawn of Christianity."

"Cardinal Mezzofanti," he writes, "spoke eight languages fluently in my presence: he expressed himself in Russian very purely and correctly; but, as he is more accustomed to the style of books than that of ordinary discourse, it is necessary to use the language of books in talking with him for the conversation to flow freely. His passion for acquiring languages is so great, that even now, in advanced age, he continues to study fresh dialects. He learned Chinese not long ago; and is constantly visiting the Propaganda for practice in conversation with its pupils of all sorts of races. I asked him to give me a list of all the languages and dialects in which he was able to express himself, and he sent me the name of GOD written in his own hand, in fifty-six languages, of which thirty were European, not counting their subdivision of dialects, seventeen Asiatic, also without reckoning dialects, five African, and four American. In his person, the confusion that arose at the building of Babel is annihilated, and all

* Letter of July 14, 1856.

nations, according to the sublime expression of Scriptures, are again of one tongue. Will posterity ever see anything similar? Mezzofanti is one of the most wonderful curiosities of Rome." *

In the end of the year 1845, Nicholas, the late Emperor of Russia, (who of course is an authority also on the Polish language,) came to Rome, on his return from Naples, where he had been visiting his invalid Empress. The history of his interview with the Pope, Gregory XVI., and of the apostolic courage and candour with which, in two successive conferences, that great pontiff laid before him the cruelty, injustice, and impolicy of his treatment of the Catholic subjects of his empire, is too well known to need repetition here.† It was commonly said at the time, and has been repeated in more than one publication, that the Pope's interpreter in this memorable conference was Cardinal Mezzofanti. This is a mistake. The only Cardinal present at the interview was the mild and retiring, but truly noble-minded and apostolic, Cardinal Acton.

A few days, however, after this interview, M. Boutanieff, the Russian minister at Rome, wrote to request that Cardinal Mezzofanti would wait upon the Emperor; and a still more direct invitation was conveyed to him, in the name of the Emperor himself, by his first aide-de-camp. The Cardinal of course could not hesitate to comply. Their conversation was held both in Russian and in Polish. The

* Remskiya Pisma—(by M. Mouravieff.) vol. I., p. 144.

† See the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, for 1846. No. 4, p. 27. See also the Kirchen-Lexicon. B. IV., p. 729. This interview forms the subject of one of the most brilliant sketches in Cardinal Wiseman's "Recollections of the Last Four Popes," pp. 409, and foll.

Emperor was filled with wonder, and confessed that, in either of these languages it would be difficult to discover any trace of foreign peculiarity in the Cardinal's accent or manner.* It is somewhat amusing to add, that the Cardinal is said to have taken some exceptions to the purity, or at least the elegance, of the Emperor's Polish conversational style.

As regards the Polish language, however, the year 1845 supplies other and more direct testimonies than that of the Emperor Nicholas.

In an extract cited by Mr. Watts from the Posthumous Works of the eminent Polish authoress, Klementyna z Tanskich Hoffmanowa, who visited Rome in the March of that year, it is stated that "the cardinal spoke Polish well, though with somewhat strained and far-fetched expressions;" and that he was master of the great difficulty of Polish pronunciation—that of the marked *l*—"although he often forgot it." This lady has preserved in her Diary a Polish couplet, written for her by the Cardinal with his own hand, under a little picture of the Madonna.

Ten ogien ktory żyia w sercu twoiem
O Matko Boża! zapal w sercu moiem.†

Another, and to the Cardinal far more interesting, representative of the Polish language appeared in Rome during the same year. Mezzofanti had long felt deeply the wrongs of his oppressed fellow-Catholics

* Manavit, p. 113.

† Translated by Mr. Watts.

"The fire that burns within that breast of thine,
Mother of God! O kindle it in mine."

Trans. of Philological Society, 1854, *p.* 148.

in Poland and Lithuania. A few months before the Emperor's arrival in Rome, they had been brought most painfully under his eyes by the visit of a refugee of that vast empire, and a victim of the atrocious policy which had become its ruling spirit—the heroic Makrena Mirazylawski, abbess of the Basilian convent of Minsk, the capital of the province of that name. The organized measures of coercion by which the Emperor endeavoured to compel the Catholic population of Lithuania and Poland, and the other Catholic subjects of the empire, into renunciation of their allegiance to the Holy See, and conformity with the doctrine and discipline of the Russian church, comprised all the members of the Catholic church in Russia without exception, even the nuns of the various communities throughout their provinces. Among these was a sisterhood of the Basilian order in the city of Minsk, thirty-five in number. The bishop of the diocese and the chaplain of the convent, having themselves conformed to the imperial will, first endeavoured to bend the resolution of these sisters by blandishment, but in the end sought by open violence to compel them into submission. But the nobleminded sisters, with their abbess at their head, firmly refused to yield; and, in the year 1839, the entire community (with the exception of one who died from grief and terror) were driven from their convent, and marched in chains to Witepsk, and afterwards to Polosk, where, with two other communities equally firm in their attachment to their creed, they were subjected, for nearly six years, to a series of cruelties and indignities

of which it is difficult to think without horror, and which would revolt all credibility, were they not attested by authorities far from partial to the monastic institute.* Chained hand and foot; flogged; beaten with the fist and with clubs; thrown to the earth and trampled under foot; compelled to break stones and to labour at quarries and earthworks; dragged in sacks after a boat through a lake in the depth of winter; supplied only with the most loathsome food and in most insufficient quantity; lodged in cells creeping with maggots and with vermin; fed for a time exclusively on salt herrings, without a drop of water; tried, in a word, by every conceivable device of cruelty;—the perseverance of these heroic women is a living miracle of martyr-like fidelity. Nine of the number died from the effects of the excessive and repeated floggings to which, week after week, they were subjected, three fell dead in the course of their cruel tasks; two were trampled to death by their drunken guards; three were drowned in these brutal *noyades;* nine were killed by the falling of a wall, and five were crushed in an excavation, while engaged in the works already referred to; eight became blind; two lost their reason; several others were maimed and crippled in various ways; so that, in the year 1845, out of the three united communities (which at the first had numbered fifty-eight) only four, of whom Makrena was the chief,

* See an article in "Household Words," May 13, 1854 (No. 216). See also Rohrbacher's Histoire de l'Eglise, T. XXVIII. pp. 431-42.

retained the use of their limbs! These heroines of faith and endurance contrived at last to effect their escape from Polosk, from which place it had been resolved to transport them to Siberia; and, through a thousand difficulties and dangers, Makrena Mirazylawski made her adventurous way to Rome.

The sufferings and the wrongs of this interesting stranger found a ready sympathy in Cardinal Mezzofanti's generous heart. He listened to her narrative with deep indignation, and took the liveliest interest in all the arrangements for her safe and fitting reception and that of her companions.

I was naturally anxious to hear what, on the other hand, were the abbess's impressions of the cardinal. In reply to the inquiries of my friend, Rev. Dr. Morris, she "spoke of him in the very highest terms." "He was," she said, "a living saint," and she described both his charity and his spirituality as very remarkable. When Father Ryllo (the Jesuit Rector of the Propaganda before F. Bresciani) left Rome for the African Mission, Cardinal Mezzofanti became Mother Makrena's director, and continued to be so for two years. "He spoke Polish," she declares, "like a native of Poland, and wrote it with great correctness." Having ascertained that the abbess had had a considerable packet of papers written by him in Polish, generally on those occasions when he could not come to her as usual, on various spiritual subjects, I was most anxious to obtain copies of them; but I was deeply mortified to learn that they were all unfor-

tunately lost in the Revolution, when she was driven out of her little convent near Santa Maria Maggiore. This humble community was afterwards increased by the arrival of other fugitives from different parts of the Russian Empire ; nor did the cardinal cease till the very last days of his life his anxious care of all their spiritual and temporal interests.

Another religious institution to which he devoted a good deal of his time was the House of Catechumens, of which, as has already been stated, he was Cardinal Protector. When M. Manavit was in Rome the inmates of this establishment, then in preparation for baptism, were between thirty and forty, several of whom were Moors or natives of Algeria ; and there are few who will not cordially agree with him* in looking upon "the modest Cardinal, catechism in hand, in the midst of this humble flock, as a nobler picture, more truly worthy of admiration, than delivering his most learned dissertation on the Vedas to the most brilliant company that ever assembled in the halls of the Propaganda."

In this, and in more than one other charitable institution of Rome, the Cardinal took especial delight in assisting at the First Communion of the young inmates ; and, from the simple fervour of his manner and the genuine truthfulness of his piety, he was most happy and effective in the little half hortatory, half ejaculatory discourses, called *Fervorini*, which in Rome ordinarily, on occasions of a First Communion, precede the actual administration of the sacrament.

* Manavit, p. 95.

M. Manavit adds that, even after Mezzofanti became cardinal, his old character of *Confessario dei Forestieri* ("Foreigners' Confessor") was by no means a sinecure. To many of the Polish exiles, clergy and laity, who visited or settled in Rome, he acted as director, especially after Father Ryllo's departure to Africa. He was equally accessible to low and high degree. M. Mouravieff* (the Russian traveller already cited) mentions an instance in which, having heard of a poor servant maid, a young Russian girl, who desired to be received into the Church, he paid her repeated visits, instructed her in the catechism, and himself completed in person every part of her preparation for the sacraments.

The death of Pope Gregory XVI., (June 1st, 1846) which, although in a ripe old age, was at the time entirely unexpected, was a great affliction to Mezzofanti, whose affectionate relations with him were maintained to the very last. The Cardinal was, of course, a member of the conclave in which (June 16th) Pius IX. was elected. The speedy and unanimous agreement of the Cardinals in this election—one of the few which seemed to convert the traditional form of "election by inspiration," into a reality—was commemorated impromptu by him in the following graceful epigram :—

Gregorius cœlo invectus sic protinus orat:
"Heu cito Pastorem da, bone Christe, gregi!"
Audit; et immissus pervadit pectora Patrum,
Spiritus : et Nonus prodit ecce Pius! †

* Quoted by Manavit, p. 98.

† Another impromptu epigram composed by the Cardinal, while

During the pontificate of Gregory XVI., Cardinal Mezzofanti never held any office of state; nor did the change of sovereign make any change in his rank or his occupations. He was, of course, continued by the new government in all his appointments; and the new Pope, Pius IX., regarded him with the same friendship and favour which he had enjoyed at the hands of his predecessor. In the social and political changes which ensued, Mezzofanti, from his non-political character, had no part. No one sympathized more cordially with the beneficent intentions of his Sovereign; but, completely shut out as he was by his position from political affairs, he pursued his quiet career, with all its wonted regularity, through the very hottest excitement of the eventful years of 1847 and 1848.

Many visitors who conversed with him in these, the last years of his life, have repeated to me the accounts which have already become familiar from the reports of those who knew him in earlier years. The fulfilment of his public duties as Cardinal;—the care of the institutions over which an especial charge had been assigned him;—the confessional, whenever his services were sought by a foreigner;—above all, his beloved pupils in the Propaganda—these formed for him the business of life.

the memorable procession of the 8th of September following, was returning from the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, amid the universal jubilation of Rome, and of representatives of all the Papal provinces, has been communicated to me.

Te Patre, Teque Pio, junguntur Principe corda:—
Ecce Tibi unum cor, Felsina, Roma, sumus!

"Almost every evening, when I was in the College of the Propaganda says F. Bresciani, "he would come to exercise himself with these dear pupils, who are collected there from all nations of the world, to be educated in sacred and profane literature and in the apostolic spirit. Then, as he conversed with me in the halls of the Propaganda when the pupils were returning from their evening walks, he would go to meet them as he saw them coming up the steps, and, as they passed him, would say something to them in their own languages; speaking to one, Chinese; to another, Armenian; to a third, Greek; to a fourth, Bulgarian. This one he would accost in Arabic, that, in Ethiopic, Geez, or Abyssinian; now he would speak in Russian, then in Albanian, in Persian, in Peguan, in Coptic, in English, in Lithuanian, in German, in Danish, in Georgian, in Kurdish, in Norwegian, in Swedish. Nor was there ever any risk that he should get entangled, or that a word of another language or a wrong pronunciation should escape him."*

* * * * * * *

"Every year, from the time of his coming to Rome, even after he had been made Cardinal, he used to assist the students in composing their several national odes for the Polyglot Academy of the Propaganda, which is held during the octave of the Epiphany, and in which the astonished foreigners who witness it behold a living emblem of the unity of the Catholic Church, which alone is able, through the Holy Spirit that vivifieth her, to show forth in one fraternity the union of all tongues, in praising and blessing the Lord who created us and redeemed us by the blood of Jesus Christ. Now the Cardinal, in these fifty tongues and upwards, in which the pupils composed, would make all the necessary corrections whether of thought, metre, or phrase, with all, and perhaps more than all, the facility and exactness of others in writing poetry in their native tongue. After he had corrected the compositions, he would take his beloved pupils, one by one, and instruct them in the proper mode of reciting and pronouncing each, And, as some of them occasionally had entered college

* Civiltà Cattolica VII, p. 877. This brilliant account of the Cardinal is given in the "Appendix" of Father Bresciani's *Ebreo di Verona*, and is full of most curious and interesting details.

when very little boys, and had forgotton some of the tones or cadence of their native languages, he would come to their aid by suggesting these, testing and correcting them with the utmost gentleness and patience."*

It would be out of place here to enter into any detail of the startling and violent changes by which these tranquil occupations were rudely interrupted. The Cardinal had watched with deep anxiety the gradually increasing demands with which each successive generous and confiding measure of the administration of Pius IX. had been met; but even his sagacious mind, schooled as it had already been in the vicissitudes of former revolutions, was not prepared for the succession of terrible events which crowded themselves into the last few weeks of the "year of revolution"—the furious demands of the clubs—the expulsion of the Jesuits—the assassination of De Rossi—the obtrusion of a republican ministry—the flight of the Pope—the proclamation of the Republic. Amid all the terrors of the time, he had but one thought—gratitude for the safety of the Pope. He was urged by his friends to imitate the example of the main body of the Cardinals, and to follow his Sovereign to Gaeta or Naples; but he refused to leave Rome, and continued through all the scenes of violence which followed the flight of Pius IX., to live, without any attempt at concealment, at his old quarters in the Palazzo Valentiniani.

Nevertheless, although, personally, Cardinal Mezzofanti suffered no molestation, the alarm and anxiety inseparable from such a time, could not fail to tell upon a constitution, at no time robust, and of late years

* Civiltà Cattolica, VII. p. 577.

much enfeebled. From the beginning of the year 1849, his strength began sensibly to diminish. It was characteristic of the man that even all the terrors of the period could not make him forget his favourite festival of the Epiphany; and that, among the numberless more deplorable changes which surrounded him, he still had a regret for the absence of the accustomed Polyglot Academy of the Propaganda. Before the middle of January he became so weak, that it was with the utmost difficulty he was able to say mass in his private chapel. While he was in this state of extreme debility, he was seized with an alarming attack of pleurisy; and although the acute symptoms were so far relieved at the end of January, that his family entertained sanguine hopes of his recovery, this illness was followed, in the early part of February, by an attack of gastric fever, by which the slender remains of his strength were speedily exhausted.

The venerable sufferer at once became sensible of his condition. From the very first intimation of his danger, he had commenced his preparation for death, with all the calm and simple piety which had characterised his life. In accordance with one of our beautiful Catholic customs—at once most holy in themselves, and an admirable help even to the sublimest piety—he at once entered upon a *Novena*, or nine days' devotion, to St. Joseph; who, as, according to an old tradition, his own eyes were closed in death by the blessed hands of his divine Saviour, has been adopted by Catholic usage as the Patron of the Dying, and who was besides the name-saint and especial

Patron of the Cardinal himself. In these pious exercises he was accompanied by his chaplain, by his nephews, Gaetano and Pietro, and above all, by his niece, Anna, who was most tenderly attached to him, and was inconsolable at the prospect of his death. He himself fixed the time for receiving the Holy Viaticum and the Extreme Unction. They were administered by Padre Ligi, parish priest of the Church of SS. Apostoli, assisted by the Cardinal's chaplain, and by his confessor, Padre Proja, now Sacristan of St. Peter's. The chaplain and the members of his family frequently assembled at his bed-side, to accompany and assist him in his dying devotions; and the intervals between these common prayers, in which all alike took part, were filled up with pious readings by Anna Minarelli, and with short prayers of the holy Cardinal himself. "Dio mio! abbiate pietà di me!" "My God, have mercy on me!"—was his ever recurring ejaculation, mingled occasionally with prayers for the exiled Pontiff, for the welfare of his widowed Church, and for the peace of his distracted country. "*Abbiate pietà della Chiesa! Preghiamo per lei!*"

By degrees he became too feeble to maintain his attention through a long prayer; but even still, with that deeply reverent spirit which had always distinguished him, he would not suffer the prayer to be abruptly terminated. "*Terminiamo con un Gloria Patri,*" "Let us finish with a Gloria Patri:"—he would say, when he found himself unable longer to attend to the Litany of the Dying, or the Rosary of the Blessed

Virgin. But in a short time he would again summon them to resume their devotion.

Early in March it became evident that his end was fast approaching. He still retained strength by energy enough to commence a second Novena to his holy Patron St. Joseph—a pious exercise, which, in the simple words of his biographer, "he was destined to bring to an end in heaven." During the last three days of life, his articulation, at times, was barely distinguishable; but even when his words were inaudible, his attendants could not mistake the unvarying fervour of his look, and the reverent movements of the lips and eyes, which betokened his unceasing prayer. From the morning of the 15th of March, the decline of strength became visibly more rapid; and, on the night of that day, he calmly expired.* His last distinguishable words, a happy augury of his blessed end—were: "*Andiamo, andiamo, presto in Paradiso.*" "*I am going—I am going—soon to Paradise!*"

The absence of the Roman Court, as well as the other unhappy circumstances of the times, precluded the possibility of performing his obsequies with the accustomed ceremonial. An offer of the honours of a public funeral, with deputations from the university, and an escort of the National Guard, was made by M. Gherardi, the Minister of Public Instruction in the new-born Republic. But these, and all other honours of the anti-Papal Republic, were declined by his family;—not only from the unseemliness of such

* His *zucchetto*, the red skull-cap worn by Cardinals, is preserved in the collection at Abbotsford.

a ceremonial at such a time, but still more as inconsistent with the loyalty, and the personal feelings, principles, and character, of the illustrious deceased.

Without a trace, therefore, of the wonted solemnities of a cardinalitial funeral—the *cappella ardente;* the lofty catafalque; the solemn lying in state; the grand *Missa de Requiem;*—the remains of the great linguist were, on the evening of the 17th of March, conducted unostentatiously, with no escort but that of his own family and of the members of his modest household, bearing torches in their hands, to their last resting-place in Sant' Onofrio, on the Janiculum—the church of his Cardinalitial title.

There, within the same walls which, as we saw, enclose the ashes of Torquato Tasso, the tomb of Cardinal Mezzofanti may be recognised by the following unpretending inscription, from the pen of his friend Mgr. Laureani :—

HEIC. IN. SEDE. HONORIS. SUI.
SITUS. EST.
JOSEPHUS. MEZZOFANTI. S. R. E. CARD.
INNOCENTIA. MORUM. ET. PIETATE. MEMORANDUS.
ITEMQUE. OMNIUM. DOCTRINARUM.
AC. VETERUM. NOVORUMQUE. IDIOMATUM.
SCIENTIA.
PLANE. SINGULARIS. ET. FAMA. CULTIORI. ORBI.
NOTISSIMUS.
BONONIAE. NATUS. ANNO. MDCCLXXIV.
ROMAE. DECESSIT. AN. MDCCCXLVIIII.

CHAPTER XVII.

(RECAPITULATION.)

We have now before us, in the narrative of Cardinal Mezzofanti's life, such materials for an estimate of his attainments as a linguist and a scholar, as a most diligent and impartial inquiry has enabled me to bring together. I can truly say that in no single instance have I suffered my own personal admiration of his extraordinary gifts to shape or to influence that inquiry. I have not looked to secure a verdict by culling the evidence. A great name is but tarnished by unmerited praise—*non eget mendacio nostro*. I have felt that I should consult best for the fame of Mezzofanti, by exhibiting it in its simple truth; and I have sought information regarding him, fearlessly and honestly, in every field in which I saw a prospect of obtaining it,—from persons of every class, country, and creed—from friendly, from indifferent, and even from hostile quarters;—from all, in a word, without exception, whom I knew or thought likely to possess the means of contributing to the solution of the interesting problem in the annals of the human mind, which is involved in his history.

It only remains to sum up the results. Nor is it easy to approach this duty with a perfectly unbiassed mind. If, on the one hand, there is a temptation to heighten the marvels of the history, viewed through what Carlyle calls "the magnifying *camera oscura* of tradition," on the other, there is the opposite danger of unduly yielding to incredulity, and discarding its genuine facts on the sole ground of their marvellousness. I shall endeavour to hold a middle course. I shall not accept any of the wonders related of Mezzofanti, unless they seem attested by undisputable authority : but neither shall I, in a case so clearly abnormal as his, and one in which all ordinary laws are so completely at fault, reject well-attested facts, because they may seem irreconcilable with every-day experience. Our judgments of unwonted mental phenomena can hardly be too diffident, or too circumspect. The marvels of the faculty of memory which we all have read of; the prodigies of analysis which many of us have witnessed in the mental arithmeticians who occasionally present themselves for exhibition ; the very vagaries of the senses themselves, which occasionally follow certain abnormal conditions of the organs—are almost as wide a departure from what we are accustomed to in these departments, as is the greatest marvel related of Mezzofanti in the faculty of language. Perhaps there could not be a more significant rebuke of this universal scepticism, than the fact that the very event which Juvenal, in his celebrated sneer at the tale of

> Velificatus Athos, et quidquid Græcia mendax
> Audet in historiâ—

has selected as the type of self-convicted mendacity—the passage of Xerxes's fleet through Mount Athos—now proves to be not only possible, but absolutely true; and it is wisely observed by Mr. Grote, that, while no amount of mere intrinsic probability is sufficient to establish the truth of an unattested statement, on the other hand, "statements in themselves highly improbable may well deserve belief, provided they be supported by sufficient positive evidence." (*Hist. of Greece*, I. 571.)

There are two heads of inquiry which appear to me specially deserving of attention.

First, the number of languages with which Cardinal Mezzofanti was acquainted, and the degree of his proficiency in each.

Secondly, his method of studying languages, and the peculiar mental development to which his extraordinary success as a linguist is attributable.

I.—I wish I could begin, in accordance with a suggestion of my friend M. d'Abbadie, by defining exactly what is meant by *knowledge* of a language. But unfortunately, the shades of such knowledge are almost infinite. The vocabularies of our modern languages contain as many as forty or fifty thousand words; and Claude Chappe, the inventor of the telegraph, calculates, that for the complete expression of human thought and sentiment in all its forms, at least ten thousand words are necessary. On the other hand, M. d'Abbadie, in his explorations in Abyssinia, was able to make his way without an

interpreter, though his vocabulary did not comprise quite six hundred words; and M. Julien, in his controversy with Pauthier, asserts that about four thousand words will amply suffice even for the study of the great classics of a language, as Homer, Byron, or Racine.

Which of these standards are we to adopt?

And even if we fix upon any one of them, how shall we apply it to the Cardinal, whereas we can only judge of him by the reports of his visitors, who applied to him, each a standard of his own?

It is plain that any such strict philosophical notion, however desirable, would be inapplicable in practice. It appears to me, however, that the objects of this inquiry will be sufficiently attained by adopting a popular notion, founded upon the common estimation of mankind. I think a man may be truly said to know a language thoroughly, if he can read it fluently and with ease; if he can write it correctly in prose, or still more, in verse; and above all, if he be admitted by intelligent and educated natives to speak it correctly and idiomatically.

I shall be content to apply this standard to Cardinal Mezzofanti.

Looking back over the narrative of Cardinal Mezzofanti's life, we can trace a tolerably regular progress in the number of languages ascribed to him through its several stages. In 1805, according to Father Caronni, "he was commonly reported to be master of more than twenty-four languages." Giordani's account of him in 1812, seems, although it does not specify any

number, to indicate a greater total than this. Stewart Rose, in 1817, speaks of him as "reading twenty languages, and conversing in eighteen." Baron von Zach, in 1820, brings the number of the languages spoken by him up to thirty-two. Lady Morgan states, that by the public report of Bologna he was reputed to be master of forty. He himself, in 1836, stated to M. Mazzinghi that he knew forty-five; and before 1839, he used to say that he knew "fifty, and Bolognese." In reply to the request of M. Mouravieff, a little later, that he would give him a list of the languages that he knew, he sent him a sheet containing the name of God in fifty-six languages. In the year 1846 he told Father Bresciani that he knew seventy-eight languages and dialects;* and a list communicated to me by his nephew, Dr. Gaetano Minarelli, by whom it has been compiled after a diligent examination of his deceased uncle's books and papers, reaches the astounding total of one hundred and fourteen!

It is clear, however, that these, and the similar statements which have been current, require considerable examination and explanation. It is much to be regretted that the Cardinal did not, with his own hand, draw up, as he had often been requested, and as he certainly intended, a complete catalogue of the languages known by him, distinguishing, as in the similar statement left by Sir William Jones, the degrees of his knowledge of the several languages which it comprised. In none of the statements on the subject

* Civiltà Cattolica, VII. 596.

which are in existence, is any attempt made to discriminate the languages with which he was familiar from those imperfectly known by him. On the contrary, from the tone of some of his panegyrists, it would seem that they wish to represent him as equally at home in all;—a notion which he himself, in his conversations with Lady Morgan, with Dr. Tholuck, with M. Mazzinghi, and on many subsequent occasions, distinctly repudiated and ridiculed. In his statement to Father Bresciani, in 1846, the Cardinal did not enumerate the seventy-eight languages and dialects which he knew or had studied; but in the year before his death, 1848, he told Father Bresciani that he was then engaged in drawing up a comparative scheme of languages, their common descent, their affinities, and their ramifications; together with a simple and easy plan for acquiring a number of languages, however dissimilar.* At my request, Father Bresciani kindly applied to Dr. Minarelli, the nephew and representative of the deceased, for a copy of this interesting paper; but unfortunately no trace of it is now discoverable, and Dr. Minarelli supposes that, as was usual with him when dissatisfied with any of his compositions, the Cardinal burnt it before his death.

During the course of this search, however, Dr. Minarelli himself was led to draw up, partly from his own knowledge of his uncle's attainments, partly from the inspection of his books and papers, a detailed list of the languages with which he believes

* *Civiltà Cattolica*, VII., p. 578.

the Cardinal to have been acquainted. This list he has kindly communicated to me. From its very nature, of course, it is to a great extent conjectural; it makes no pretension to a scientific classification of the languages; and it contains several evident oversights and errors; but as the writer, in addition to his long personal intercourse with his uncle, enjoyed the opportunity of access to his papers and memoranda, and above all to his books in various languages, his grammars, dictionaries, and vocabularies, and the marginal notes and observations—the schemes, paradigms, critical analyses, and other evidences of knowledge, or at least of study—which they contain; and as he has been mainly guided by these in the compilation of his list of languages, I shall translate the paper in its integrity, merely correcting certain obvious errors, and striking out a few of the items in the enumeration, in which, clearly by mistake, the same language is twice repeated. The order of languages is in part alphabetical.

1. Albanese or Epirote.
2. Arabic.
3. Armenian.
4. Angolese.
5. Aymara.
6. Algonquin.
7. Brazilian.
8. Mexican.
9. Paraguay.
10. Peruvian.
11. Birman.
12. Bohemian.
13. Bunda, (in Angola.)
14. Betoi.
15. *Baure*,* (?)
16. *Braubica*,† (?)
17. Chaldee.
18. Chinese.
19. Cochin-Chinese.
20. Tonkinese.
21. Japanese.
22. Curaçao.
23. Coptic.
24. Chilian.
25. Koordish.
26. Californian.
27. Cora.
28. *Conserica*,‡ (?)

* I do not know what language is here meant. Perhaps it is a mistake for *Bavara*—the Bavarian dialect of German: or possibly it may mean the Dutch of the *Boors* at the Cape of Good Hope.

† Possibly *Berberica*—the Barbary dialect of Arabic.

‡ This is probably meant for *Concanico*—an Indian language which often appeared in the programme of the Propaganda Academy, while

29 *Cahuapana*,* (?)
30 Canisiana.
31 Cayubaba.
32 Cochimi.
33 Danish.
34 Swedish.
35 Norwegian.
36 Icelandic.
37 Lappish.
38 Tamul.
39 Hebrew.
40 Rabbinical Hebrew.
41 Samaritan.
42 Coptic Egyptian.
43 Coptic Arabic.†
44 Etruscan ‡ (so far as known to the learned.)
45 Ethiopic.
46 *Emabellada*.§ (?)
47 Phenician,(so far as it is known.)
48 Flemish.
49 French.
50 Breton French.
51 Lorraine Dialect.
52 Provençal.
53 Gothic and Visi Gothic.
54 Ancient Greek.
55 Romaic.
56 Georgian or Iberian.
57 Grisons,or Rhetian.
58 Guarany.
59 Guariza.
60 Illyrian.
61 Iberian.‖
62 *Idioma Mistico*¶
63 Itomani.
64 Cingalese.
65 Hindostani.
66 Malabar.
67 Malay.
68 Sanscrit.
69 Sanscrit Dialect of Eastern Persia.
70 English.
71 Ancient Breton**
72 Scottish Celtic.††
73 Scotch
74 Irish.
75 Welsh.
76 Italian.
77 Friulese.
78 Maltese.
79 Sardinian.
80 Lombard, Ligurian, Piedmontese, Sicilian & Tuscan dialect of Italian.
81 Latin.
82 Maronite and Syro-Maronite.(?)
83 Madagascar.
84 Mobima.
85 Moorish.
86 Maya.
87 Dutch.
88 Othomi.
89 Omagua.
90 Australian.‡‡
91 Persian.
92 Polish.
93 Portuguese.
94 Peguan.

Mezzofanti was in Rome. It is the dialect of Kunka, in the province of Orissa.

* This is certainly meant for *Tepehuana*, one of the Central American point of languages.

† Probably by these names are meant the two *spoken* dialects of the orthodox christians of modern Egypt. The Coptic (No. 23.) is the *learned* language of the Liturgy.

‡ This item, as well as Nos. 47 and 53, may be ascribed to the writer's desire to swell the total of his uncle's languages—I need hardly say that they have no practical bearing on the question.

§ I am unable to conjecture the meaning of this name.

‖ This is either a repetition of No. 56., or it designates the whole class of languages called Iberian, and not an individual language.

¶ Perhaps Misteco—the Mistek; one of the Mexican group of languages. Many interesting particulars regarding them will be found in Squier's Nicaragua.

** This probably means the old Celtic of Brittany. No. 50 is the modern patois of the province.

†† If this be meant for Gaelic, as seems likely, No. 73 can only be the Lowland Scotch.

‡‡ I need hardly observe on the vagueness of this name. Mezzo-

95 Pimpanga.	102 Slavo-Ruthenian	108 Basque.
96 Quichua.†	103 Slavo-Wallachian	109 Tanna.§
97 Russian.	104 Syriac.	110 German.
98 *Rocorana* (?)‡	105 Samogitian, or Lettish.	111 Tibetan.
99 Slavonic.		112 Turkish.
100 Slavo-Carniolan.	106 Spanish.	113 Hungarian.
101 Slavo-Servian.	107 Catalonian.	114 Gipsy.

Such is the Cavaliere Minarelli's report of the result at which he has arrived, after an examination of the books and manuscripts of his illustrious uncle. In its form, I regret to say, it is far from satisfactory. It places on exactly the same level languages generically distinct and mere provincial varieties of dialect. In one or two instances, also, (as Angolese and Bunda, Swedish and Norwegian,) the same language appears twice under different names. Above all, the compiler has not attempted to classify the languages acccording *to the degree of the Cardinal's acquaintance with each of them;* nor has he entered into any explanation of the nature of the evidence of acquaintance with each of them which is supplied by the documents upon which he relies.‖

fanti learned from more than one missionary something of the languages of Oceanica; but how much I have no means of determining.

* For Pampanga, one of the languages of the Philippine Islands—an offshoot of the Malay family.

† The old language of Peru. It is fast recovering the ground from which it had been driven by the Spanish. See Markham's "Cuzco and Lima."

‡ I cannot guess what is meant by this name.

§ A language of the New Hebrides. See Adelung, I. p. 626

‖ There can be no doubt that much light on this point may be derived from a thorough examination of these books and manuscripts; and I trust that some of the Cardinal's friends at Rome, (where his library is now deposited, having been purchased for the Vatican,) will undertake the task. I have endeavoured in some degree to supply the want by a careful examination of the catalogue published in Rome in 1851, and often cited in this volume. But it is so full of

As I cannot, consistently with the fundamental principle of this inquiry, accept such a statement, when unsupported by the testimony of native (or otherwise competent) witnesses for the several languages, as conclusive evidence of the Cardinal's knowledge of the languages which it ascribes to him, I shall merely offer this otherwise interesting paper at whatever may be considered its just value ; and I shall endeavour to decide the question upon grounds entirely independent of it, and drawn solely from the materials which I have already placed before the reader.

It will, no doubt, have been observed that, so far as regards the reports of the travellers and others who conversed with the Cardinal, the degrees of his power of speaking the several languages have been very differently tested. In some languages he was, as it were, perpetually under trial: in others, very frequently, and in prolonged conversations ; in others, less frequently, but nevertheless searchingly enough ; in others, in fine, perhaps only to the extent of a few questions and answers. It is absolutely necessary, in forming any judgment, to attend carefully to this circumstance. I shall endeavour, therefore, to divide the languages ascribed to him into four different classes.

First, languages certainly spoken by Cardinal Mezzofanti with a perfection rare in foreigners.

Secondly, languages which is he said to have spoken well, but as to which the evidence of sufficient trial is not so complete.

the grossest and most ludicrous inaccuracies, so utterly unscientific, and so constantly confounds one language with another, that it can only be used with the utmost caution, and at best affords but little assistance for the purposes of the Memoir.

Thirdly, languages which he spoke freely, but less perfectly.

Fourthly, languages in which he could merely express himself and initiate a conversation. I shall add :—

Fifthly, certain other languages which he had studied from books, but does not appear to have spoken.

And lastly, dialects of the principal languages. This order, of course, precludes all idea of a scientific classification* of the languages according to families.

I.—*Languages frequently tested, and spoken with rare excellence.*†

1 Hebrew (Supra, p. 283, 341, 345, 371.)
2 Rabbinical Hebrew (283, 341.)
3 Arabic, (283, 371, 441.)
4 Chaldee, (278, 384, 362, 451.)
5 Coptic, (311, 441, 451.)
6 Ancient Armenian, (352, 441.)
7 Modern Armenian, (352, 441.)
8 Persian, (278, 352, 394.)
9 Turkish, (226, 311, 393, 441.)
10 Albanese, (362, 393, 451.)
11 Maltese, (336, 362.)
12 Greek, (353.)
13 Romaic, (353.)
14 Latin, (201, 347.)
15 Italian, *(passim.)*
16 Spanish, (276, 312, 441.)
17 Portuguese, (337, 367.)
18 French, (271, 276, 387.)
19 German, (239, 250, 271, 277, 281, 325, 345, 346, 393.)
20 Swedish, (271, 272, 350, 351.)
21 Danish, (239, 281.)
22 Dutch, (328, 330, 332.)
23 Flemish, (324, 328.)
24 English, (223, 226, 228, 348, 403.)
25 Illyrian, (393, 441.)
26 Russian, (244, 442, 443.)
27 Polish, (328, 444, 447.)
28 Czechish, or Bohemian, (246, 233.)
29 Magyar, (242, 389, 391.)
30 Chinese, (309, 310, 365, 368, 369, 451.

II.—*Stated to have been spoken fluently, but hardly sufficiently tested.*

1 Syriac, (354, 364.)
2 Geez, (383, 385, 394.)
3 Amarinna, (384, 385, 334.)
4 Hindostani, (364, 366.)
5 Guzarattee, 367.
6 Basque, (393, 388.)
7 Wallachian, (216, 244.)
8 Californian, (355-7.)
9 Algonquin, (360-1.)

* I should observe that I do not think it necessary to adopt the nomenclature of languages recently introduced. I will for the most part follow that of Adelung.

† I shall refer for the several language, to the pages which contain the notices of the Cardinal's proficiency in each. There are two or three cases in which the proof may not appear quite decisive: but I have much understated, even in these, the common opinion of his friends.

III. *Spoken rarely, and less perfectly.*

1 Koordish, (394, 451.)
2 Georgian, (251, 394.)
3 Servian (the dialects of Bosnia and of the Bannat,) 394.
4 Bulgarian, (365, 393 441.)
5 Gipsy language, (244.)
6 Peguan, (364, 418, 451.)
7 Welsh, (320, 322, 323.)
8 Angolese, (370, 394,)
9 Mexican, (441.)
10 Chilian, (441.)
11 Peruvian, (441.)

IV. *Spoken imperfectly ;—a few sentences and conversational forms.*

1 Cingalese, (363.)
2 Birmese, (270, 463.*)
3 Japanese, (463.)
4 Irish, (442.)
5 Gaelic, (424.)
6 Chippewa Indian, (360.)
7 Delaware, (360.)
8 Some of the languages of Oceanica, (441.)

V. *Studied from books, but not known to have been spoken.*

1 Sanscrit, (291, 394.)
2 Malay, (464.)
3 Tonquinese, (463.)
4 Cochin-Chinese, (463.)
5 Tibetan, (465.)
6 Japanese, (463.)
7 Icelandic, (464.)
8 Lappish, (394.)
9 Ruthenian, (311.)
10 Frisian, (282.)
11 Lettish, (394, 451.)
12 Cornish,(old British of Cornwall,) (280.)
13 Quichua, (ancient Peruvian,) (281.)
14 Bimbarra, (Central African,) (281.)

VI.—*Dialects spoken, or their peculiarities understood.*

1.—HEBREW.

Samaritan, (416.)

2.—ARABIC.

Syrian dialect (fluently, 371.)
Egyptian do., (311.)
Moorish, (171.)
Berber, (463.)

3.—CHINESE.

Kiang-Si dialect, (416.)
Hu-quam do., (416.)

4.—ITALIAN.

Sicilian, (324, 354.)
Sardinian, (158-9.)
Neapolitan, (324.)
Bolognese, (247, 344.)
Lombard, (464.)
Friulese, (464.)

5.—SPANISH

Catalan, (441.)
Valencian, (441.)
Majorican, (441.)

6.—BASQUE.

Labourdain, (387-8.)
Souletin, (387.)
Guipuscoan, (388.)

7.—MAGYAR.

Debreczeny, (391.)
Eperies, (391.)
Pesth, (391.)
Transylvanian, (491.)

8.—GERMAN.

Ancient Gothic, (464.)
Rhetian (Grisons,) (Appendix.)
Sette Communi dialect, (218.)

* In this and the few other instances in which I have referred to Cavalliere Minarelli's list of the Cardinal's languages, it is amply supported by the printed catalogue of his library, which contains several works in each language, evidently provided with a view to the study of it.

Dialects of Northern and Southern Germany, (243.

9.—FRENCH.

Provençal, (275.)
Tolosan, (440.)
Burgundian, (444.)
Gascon, (463.)
Bearnais, (440.)
Lorraine, (463.)
Bas Breton, (439.)

10.—ENGLISH.

Somersetshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire dialects, (404.)
Lowland Scotch, (437.)

I should add that many of these dialects, as the Moorish and Berber Arabic, the Spanish of Majorca, the Provençal French, the Italian of Sicily and Sardinia, and the language of the Grisons or Graubünden, might most justly be described as separate languages, at least as regards the difficulty of acquisition. In the catalogue of the Cavaliere Minarelli a series of languages (the very names of which the reader probably never has heard,) are enumerated, chiefly of the central and South American families—of the former, the Cora, the Tepehuana, the Mistek, the Othomi, the Maya ; of the latter, the Paraguay, the Omagua, the Aymara, the Canisiana, and the Mobima. I am not aware of the authority on which the Cavaliere relies in reference to these languages. For the majority of them, I must say that I cannot find in the catalogue of the Cardinal's library any distinct trace whatever of his having studied them ; but it is certain that he had given his attention early to the languages of these countries ; that he had opportunities in Bologna of conversing with ex-Jesuit missionaries from the central and South American provinces ; and that the library of the Propaganda, of which he had the unrestricted use, contains many printed and manuscript elementary works in languages of which little trace is elsewhere to be found.

Summing up, therefore, all the authentic accounts of him as yet made public; discarding the loose statements of superficial marvel-mongers, and divesting the genuine reports, as far as possible, of the vagueness by which many of them have been characterized, it appears that, in addition to a large number of (more than thirty) minor dialects, Mezzofanti was acquainted in various degrees with seventy-two languages, popularly, if not scientifically, regarded as distinct:—almost the exact number which F. Bresciani ascribes to him; that of these he spoke with freedom, and with a purity of accent, of vocabulary, and of idiom, rarely attained by foreigners, no fewer than thirty; that he was intimately acquainted with all the leading dialects of these; that he spoke less perfectly, (or rather is not shown to have possessed the same mastery of) nine others, in all of which, however, his pronunciation, at least, is described as quite perfect; that he could, (and occasionally did,) converse in eleven other languages, but with what degree of accuracy it is difficult to say; that he could at least initiate a conversation, and exchange certain conversational forms in eight others; and that he had studied the structure and the elementary vocabularies of fourteen others. As regards the languages included in the latter categories, it is quite possible that he may also have spoken in a certain way some at least among them. So far as I have learned, there is no evidence that he actually did speak any of them: but with him there was little perceptible interval between knowledge of

the elementary structure and vocabulary of a language, and the power of conversing in it.

Such is the astounding result to which the united evidence of this vast body of witnesses, testifying without consent, and indeed for the most part utterly unknown to each other, appears irresistibly to lead. I am far, I confess, from accepting in their strict letter many of the rhetorical expressions of these writers—the natural result of warm admiration, however just and well founded. I do not believe, for example, that in each and all the thirty languages enumerated in the first category, the Cardinal actually spoke, as some of the witnesses say, "with all the purity and propriety of a native;" that he could not in any one of them "be recognized as a foreigner;" or that, in them all, he "spoke without the slightest trace of peculiar accent." On the contrary, I know that, in several of these, he made occasional trips. I do not overlook the "four minor mistakes" in his German conversation with Dr. Tholuck; nor his occasionally "forgetting the marked *l* in his Polish," nor the criticism of his manner in several other languages, as "formed rather from books than from conversation." Neither do I believe that he had mastered the *entire* vocabulary of each of these languages. Nor shall I even venture to say to what point his knowledge of the several vocabularies extended. So far from shutting out from my judgment the drawbacks on the undiscriminating praise heaped upon the Cardinal by some of his biographers, which these criticisms imply, I regard them as (by recalling it from the realm of legend,)

forming the best and most secure foundation of a reputation which, allowing for every drawback, far transcends all that the world has ever hitherto known. I do not say that in all these languages, or perhaps in any of them, Cardinal Mezzofanti was the perfect paragon which some have described him; but, reverting to the standard with which I set out, I cannot hesitate to infer from these united testimonies, that his knowledge of each and every one of the leading languages of the world, ancient and modern, fully equalled, and in several of these languages excelled, the knowledge of those who are commonly reputed as accomplished linguists in the several languages, even when they have devoted their attention to the study of one or other of these languages exclusively. I do not say that he was *literally faultless* in speaking these languages; nor that what I have said is literally true of *each and every one* of the thirty that have been enumerated: but, if the attestations recorded in this volume have any meaning, they lead to the inevitable conclusion, that in the power of speaking the languages in which he was best tried,—whether Hebrew, or Arabic, or Armenian, or Persian, or Turkish, or Albanese, or Maltese, or Greek, or Romaic, or Latin, or Italian, or Spanish, or Portuguese, or French, or Swedish, or Danish, or Dutch, or Flemish, or English, or Russian, or Bohemian, or Magyar, or Chinese;—his success is entirely beyond suspicion, and will bear comparison with that of the most accomplished non-native masters of these languages, even those who have confined themselves to one or two of the num-

ber. For the few languages upon which I myself may presume to speak, I most unhesitatingly adopt this conclusion, comparing my recollections of the Cardinal with those I retain of almost any other foreigner whom I have ever heard speak the same languages.

The reader's recollection of the attainments of the most remarkable linguists enumerated in the memoir prefixed to this biography will enable him, therefore, to see how immeasurably Cardinal Mezzofanti transcends them all. Taking the very highest estimate which has been offered of their attainments, the list of those reputed to have possessed more than ten languages is a very short one. Only four—Mithridates, Pico of Mirandola, Jonadab Alhanar, and Sir William Jones—are said, in the loosest sense, to have passed the limit of twenty. To the first two fame ascribes twenty-two, to the last two twenty-eight languages. Müller, Niebuhr, Fulgence Fresnel, and perhaps Sir John Bowring, are usually set down as knowing twenty languages. For Elihu Burritt, Csoma de Körös, their admirers claim eighteen. Renaudot, the controversialist, is said to have known seventeen, Professor Lee sixteen, and the attainments of the older linguists, as Arias Montamus, Martin del Rio, the converted Rabbi Libertas Cominetus, the Admirable Crichton—are said to have ranged from this down to ten or twelve—most of them the ordinary languages of learned and of polite society. It is further to be observed that in no one of those cases has the evidence been examined, the trustworthiness of the witnesses

considered, or the degrees of knowledge of the various languages ascertained. Whatever of doubt rests even upon the vaguest statements regarding Mezzofanti, applies with double force in every one of the above instances.

But even putting these considerations aside, and accepting the estimates upon the showing of the parties themselves or their admirers, how far does the very highest of them fall short of what has been demonstrated of Cardinal Mezzofanti!

II. On the curious question as to the system pursued by the Cardinal in the study of languages, I regret to say that little light seems now obtainable. The variety of systems employed by students is endless. The eccentric linguist, Roberts Jones, described in the Introductory Memoir, as soon as he had an opportunity of comparing the vocabulary of a new language with those which he had already studied, proceeded by *striking out of it* all those words which were common to it with any of the languages already familiar to him, and then impressing on his memory *the words which remained.* M. Antoine d'Abbadie told me that, in the unwritten languages with which he had to deal, his plan was to write out, with the aid of an interpreter, a list of about five hundred of the leading and most indispensable words, and a few conversational forms; and then to complete his stock of words "by the assistance of *an intelligent child who knew no language but the one which he was studying;* —because children best understand, and most readily

apprehend, an imperfectly conveyed meaning." Some students commence with the vocabulary ; others, with the structural forms of a language. With some the process is tedious and full of labour : others proceed with almost the rapidity of intuition. In comparing the various possible systems, it has not unnaturally been supposed that the process which, in Cardinal Mezzofanti, led to results so rapid and so extraordinary, might be usefully applied, at least in some modified form, to the practical study of languages, even on that modest scale in which they enter into ordinary education. But unfortunately, even if such a fruit could be hoped from his experience, it does not appear that the Cardinal possessed any extraordinary secret, or at least that he ever clearly explained to any of his visitors the secret process, if any, which he employed. One thing at least is certain, and should not be forgotten by those who are always on the look out for short roads to learning, that, whatever may have been his system, and however it may have quickened or facilitated the result for him, it did not enable him to dispense with the sedulous and systematic use of all the ordinary appliances of study, and especially of every available means for the acquisition of vocabularies, and of practice in their exercise.

It is true he told M. Libri that he found the learning of languages "less difficult than is generally thought : that there is but a limited number of points to which it is necessary to direct attention ; and that, when one is master of these points, the remainder follows with great facility ;" adding that,

"when one has learned ten or a dozen languages essentially different from each other, one may, with a little study and attention, learn any number of them." But he also stated to Dr. Tholuck "that his own way of learning new languages was no other than that of our school-boys, by writing out paradigms and words, and committing them to memory." (P. 278.) Dictionaries, reading-books, catechisms, vocabularies, were anxiously sought by him, and industriously used. The society and conversation of strangers was eagerly—in one less modest and simple it might almost appear obtrusively—courted, and turned to advantage. A constant and systematic habit of translation and composition both in prose and verse was maintained. In a word, nothing can be clearer than that with Mezzofanti, as with the humblest cultivators of the same study, the process of acquiring each new language was, if not slow, at least laborious; and that, with all his extraordinary gifts, the eminence to which he attained, is in great part to be attributed to his own almost unexampled energy, and to the perseverance with which he continued to cultivate these gifts to the very latest day of his life. He understood thoroughly, as all who have ever attained to eminence have understood, the true secret of study—economical and systematic employment of time. The great jurist D'Aguesseau composed one of his most valuable works in the scraps of time which he was able to save from his wife's unpunctuality in the hour of dinner. Mezzofanti made it a rule, even amid his most frequent and most distracting occupa-

tions, to turn to account every chance moment in which he was released from actual pressure. No matter how brief or how precarious the interval, his books and papers were generally at hand. And even when no such appliance of study were within reach his active and self-concentrated mind was constantly engaged. He possessed a rare power of self-abstraction, by which he was able to concentrate all his faculties upon any language which he desired to pursue, to the exclusion of all the others that he knew. In this respect he was entirely independent of books. When the great mathematician, Euler, became blind, he was able to form the most complicated diagrams, and to resolve the most intricate calculations, in his mind. Every one has heard, too, of cases like that of the prisoner described by Pope :—

> Who, locked from ink and paper, scrawls
> With desperate charcoal on his darkened walls.

But Mezzofanti's power of mental study was even more wonderful. He had the habit of *thinking when alone, in each and all of his various languages* in succession ; so that, without the presence of a second individual, he almost enjoyed the advantage of practice in conversation ! The only parallel for this extraordinary mental phenomenon that I know, is a story which I have somewhere read, of a musician who attained to great perfection as an instrumental performer, although hardly ever known to touch an instrument for the purpose of practice. This man, it is said, was *constantly practising in his mind ;* and his fingers were actually observed to be

always in motion, as though engaged in the act of playing.

On the other hand, it is certain that Mezzofanti's power of acquiring languages was mainly a gift of nature. It is not easy to say in what this natural gift consisted. Among the faculties of the mind chiefly employed in acquiring language—perception, analysis, judgment, and memory—by some it has been placed in his intuitive quickness of perception—by others in his memory—and by others, in his power of analysing the leading inflexional and structural characteristics by which each language is distinguished. Others place it in some mysterious delicacy of his ear, which detected in each language a sort of rhythm or systematic structure, and thus supplied a key to all its forms But no one of these characteristics, taken singly, even in its very highest development, will account for a success so entirely unexampled. Almost all great linguists, it is true, have been remarkable for their powers of memory; but there are many examples of such memory, unaccompanied by any very peculiar excellence in the gift of languages. Still less can it be ascribed exclusively to any quickness of perception, or any perfection of analytic or synthetic power. Perhaps there is no form in which these powers are so wondrously displayed, as in the curious phenomena of mental arithmetic. And yet I am not aware that any of the extraordinary mental calculators has been distinguished as a linguist. On the contrary, many of them have been singularly deficient in this respect.

Mr. George Bidder, one of the latest, and in many respects most creditable, examples of this faculty, confesses his entire deficiency in talent for literature or language; and Zachariah Dase, whose performances as a calculator almost exceeded all belief, could never master a word of any foreign language except a little German.

But in Cardinal Mezzofanti we meet not only each of these qualities, but a most perfect and perfectly balanced union of them all. His memory in itself would have made him an object of wonder. Quick and tenacious to a degree certainly not inferior to any recorded example of the faculty, it was one of the most universal in its application of which any record is preserved; embracing every variety of subject—not alone the vocabularies and forms which he acquired, but every kind of matter to which it was directed; -history, poetry, and even persons and personal occurrences. But there was, above all, one characteristic in which it was distinguished from almost all other memories. Some of those qualities already named were possessed by other individuals in an equal, if not a greater or more striking, degree. Henderson, the player, was said to be able to repeat the greater part of the most miscellaneous contents of a newspaper after a single reading; and the mental arithmetician just named, Zachariah Dase, after *dipping* his eye over a row of twelve figures, could repeat them backwards and forwards, and in every other order, and could multiply them instantaneously by one or two figures at pleasure. Some

memories too possessed this faculty entirely independent of the judgment or the reasoning powers. Pére Menestrier was able to repeat a long jumble of unmeaning names after hearing them but once, and the young Corsican mentioned by Padre Menocchio could do the same, even after the lapse of an entire year! But the perfection of Mezzofanti's memory was different from all these, and consisted in its *extraordinary readiness*. Sir W. Hamilton, in one of his notes on Reid, happily reviving an old view of Aristotle, distinguishes between *memory* (μνημή) and *reminiscence*, (ἀνάμνησις)—between spontaneous and elaborated memory—memory of intuition, and memory of evolution. In Mezzofanti the latter hardly appears to have had a place. His memory seems to have acted by intuition alone. It was not only a rare capacity for storing up and retaining the impressions once made upon it, no matter how rapid and how various, but a power of holding them *distinct from each other*, and ready for instant use. And thus, over the vast and various assortment of vocabularies which he possessed, he enjoyed a control so complete, that he would draw upon each and all at pleasure, as the medium for the expression of his thoughts;—just as the experimentalist, by the shifting of a slide, can change, instantaneously and at will, the colour of the light with which he illuminates the object of exhibition. Dugald Stewart tells the case of a young woman who could repeat an entire sermon after a single hearing, and whose sole trick of memory consisted in connecting in her mind each part of the discourse with a part of

the ceiling. It would almost seem as if the memory of Mezzofanti had some such local division into compartments, in which the several vocabularies *could*, as it were, *be stored apart*, and through which his mind could range at pleasure, culling from each the objects or words which it desired, no matter how various or how unconnected with each other.

With such a memory as this to guide its action, and to supply the material for its operation, the extraordinary and almost intuitive power of analysis—something in its own order like what Wollaston called in William Phillips, the "mathematical sense"—which Mezzofanti possessed, and which enabled him at once to seize upon the whole system of a language—form, structure, idiom, genius, spirit—led by a process which it is easy to understand, to the wonderful results which this great linguist accomplished. Memory supplied the material with unfailing abundance and regularity. The analytic faculties were the tools which the mind employed in operating upon the material thus supplied for the use.

Such appears to have been the mental process. But for the practical power of speaking the languages thus mastered in theory, Mezzofanti was also indebted to his singularly quick and delicate organization of ear and tongue. It might seem that the former of these organs could only enter as a very subordinate element, and in a purely mechanical way, into the faculty of speech. Indeed the French journals of the past month, (February, 1858,) contain an account of a deaf and dumb man, M. Moser, who (of

course entirely unaided by ear,) has mastered, besides Greek and Latin, no fewer than fourteen modern languages. But, strange as this may seem, it is certain that in Mezzofanti's case the ear, in addition to its direct and natural use in comprehending and catching up the sounds of languages, and appreciating all their delicate varieties and shades, (in which it is admitted to have been ready and infallible beyond all precedent,) had a nobler, and as it were, more intellectual function; that its office was a thing of mind as well as of organization; that he possessed, as it were, *an inner and higher sense*, distinct from the *material organ;* and that the impressions which this sense conveyed, helped him to the structure and the philosophical character of language, as well as to its rhythm, its vocal sounds, and its peculiar intonations. It is difficult to explain the exact mental operation, by which this curious result was attained; but the Cardinal himself repeatedly declared his consciousness of such an operation, and ascribed to it, in a great degree, the rapidity and the ease with which he overcame what to others form the main difficulty in the study of a language, and with which, having once made the first step in each language, he mastered, as if by intuition, all the mysteries of its structural system.

Another element of his wonderful talent was his genuine enthusiasm and the unpretending simplicity of his character. "Pretension," says Emerson, "may sit still, but cannot act." There was no pretension about Mezzofanti; nor had he anything of that morbid intellectual sensitiveness which shrinks from the

first blunders to which a novice in a foreign language is exposed, and which restrains many from the attempt to speak, by the very apprehension of failure. * Children, as is well known, learn to speak a language more rapidly than their elders. I cannot doubt that Mezzofanti's child-like simplicity and innocence, were among the causes of his wonderful success as a speaker of many tongues.

It was not to be expected that a man so eminent in one absorbing pursuit should have made a very distinguished figure in general literature or science. Among the many laudatory reports of him which are contained in this volume, a few will be found which hardly concede to him even a second-rate place as a scholar, still less as a philologer. In some of the literary circles of Rome, Mezzofanti was not popular. M. Libri† alludes to one source of unfriendly feeling in his regard. There is another which may perhaps have already struck the reader. From some of the facts noticed in the Introductory Memoir of German linguists ‡ and from other incidental allusions, the reader will have observed a certain tendency on the part of philologers to depreciate the pursuit of linguists, and to undervalue its usefulness; and it is precisely from the philologers that this low estimate of Mezzofanti proceeds. It is only just, how-

* I once travelled through the entire length of France with a friend, who was an excellent book-scholar in the French language, but who, from the feeling which I describe, never could prevail on himself to attempt to speak French in my presence. During a journey of several days, I only heard him utter one solitary *oui*; and even this was at a time when he was not aware that I was within hearing.

† p. 290. ‡ p. 78.

ever, to Baron Bunsen, who is pre-eminently the head of the German school of that science, to admit that he carefully draws the distinction between the two branches of the study of language—that of the linguist, and that of the philologer. And although the natural preference which a student unconsciously gives to his own favourite pursuit, no doubt leads him to attach little value to what Mezzofanti knew, and to dwell more on what in his opinion he did not know, yet it must be said that he gives him full credit for his unexampled power as a linguist.

The Baron's recollections, nevertheless, contain a summary of the strictures upon the literary character of Mezzofanti, which were current during his lifetime—that his learning was merely superficial—that in the phrase of the late Mr. Francis Hare, "with the keys of the knowledge of every nation in his hand, he never unlocked their real treasures;" that in all the countless languages which he spoke he "never said anything;" that he left no work or none of any value behind him; that he was utterly ignorant of philology; that his theology was mere scholasticism; that he had no idea of Biblical criticism, and that even as a critical Greek scholar, he was very deficient.

It would be a very mistaken zeal for the honour of Cardinal Mezzofanti to deny the literal truth of several of these criticisms. Most of the branches of knowledge in which he is here represented as deficient, are in themselves the study of an ordinary life. To have added them all to what he really did possess,

would have been a marvel far exceeding the greatest wonder that has ever been ascribed to him; nor was any one more ready than the modest Cardinal himself, not merely to admit many particulars in which his learning was defective, but even to disparage the learning which he actually possessed. He confessed over and over again, that he was no philologer—that he was nothing but "an ill bound dictionary." He expressed his regret to Guido Görres, that he had begun his studies at a time when this science was not cultivated. He lamented the weakness of his chest and other constitutional infirmities, which prevented him from writing. He deplored to Cardinal Wiseman, that, when he should be gone, he would have left behind him no trace of what he knew.

But, notwithstanding his own modest estimate of himself, I think enough will be found in the testimonies of many unsuspected witnesses embodied in this Memoir, to shew that the depreciating strictures, to which I have here alluded, are grievously exaggerated. Cardinal Mezzofanti certainly was not a scientific philologer; but the Abbé Gaume's memorandum proves that, while he had little taste for the mere speculative part of the subject—for those

> Cloud-built towers by ghostly masons wrought,
> On shadowy thoroughfares of thought—

he was fully sensible of the true use of the science, and had not neglected the study, especially in its most important aspect—its bearing upon religious history. He was not a professed archæologist. He

may have failed in the interpretation of the particular Greek inscription, to which Baron Bunsen refers; nor did he pursue Greek criticism as a special study. But his friends Cavedoni and Laureani, themselves accomplished archæologists, entertained the highest respect for his judgment in that study. The Abate Matranga bore ample witness to the depth and accuracy of his Greek scholarship; and I myself, in the few observations which I heard him offer on the Eugubian inscriptions, was struck by the sagacity, the precision, and the suggestive spirit which they evinced.

Far more unjust, however, are Mr. Hare's remark about the keys, and the still more disparaging saying, quoted by Baron Bunsen, which describes Mezzofanti as, "with all his forty-two languages, never saying anything." The numberless reports of visitors at every period of his life, from Mr. Stewart Rose, in 1817, downwards, which are detailed in this volume, put entirely beyond question both his capacity and his actual attainments in general literature. Each visitor, for the most part, found him well acquainted with the literature of his own country. Very many of them (as Baron Glucky de Stenitzer for Hungary*) bear witness to his familiarity with their national histories. His conversation with M. Libri, "on the most difficult points in the history of India," evinced a mind of a very different calibre from what these supercilious criticisms suppose: and, from the historian of the Mathematical Sciences, it is no ordinary compliment towards one with whom these can have been

* P. 391.

but a subordinate study, that, without a moment's preparation, (the subject having been only casually introduced by M. Libri,) he "spoke for half-an-hour on the astronomy and mathematics of the Indian races, in a manner which would have done honour to a man whose chief occupation had been tracing the history of the sciences." * I must dissent strongly, also, from the disparaging opinion that M. Bunsen expresses as to the Cardinal's capacity for the more strictly professional sciences of Biblical criticism and Theology. M. Bunsen, no doubt, when he speaks of Biblical criticism, speaks mainly of the German School of that science, and very probably of the last and most popular critic, Lachmann. Now, with all their merits, there is much in the spirit and the language of many of these writers, and, I may specially say, of Lachmann, against which Mezzofanti's whole mind would have revolted; and I can well understand that, between his opinions and those of the Baron regarding them, there would have been but little sympathy. But it is most unjust to Mezzofanti to say that "he had no idea" of the subject. One of his earliest literary friends was the great Biblical scholar and critic, De Rossi. While he was still professor at Bologna, the Abate Cavedoni, of Modena, spoke with high praise of his ability as a biblical critic. The Abate Mellini, professor of Scripture in Bologna, gratefully acknowledges the assistance which he derived from him in reference to the versions of the Bible: and Cardinal Wiseman, who will not be suspected of undervaluing any branch of Biblical science, told me that, although it is quite true that Mezzofanti had no love

* P. 291

for the German critics, and though he never was a professed critic himself, he was nevertheless quite conversant with the science, and understood its history and its principles, and the divisions of MMS., recensions, families, &c., perfectly well.

As to Theology, his reputation in Rome was not high. Yet his attainments, especially in moral theology, were considered respectable. The readers of Sir W. Hamilton will not look on the charge of "scholasticism" as any very grave disparagement; but I must add that neither did Mezzofanti neglect the modern divines, even those outside of Italy. With Guido Görres he spoke of Möhler's well-known *Symbolik*, although it was at that period but little known beyond the limits of Germany.

As a preacher, Mezzofanti, though earnest and impressive, never was in any way remarkable. He confined himself chiefly to the duty of catechetical instruction; and in Rome his only efforts as a preacher, were the short and simple exhortations addressed to children at the time of admitting them to their first Communion—a duty of the ministry which was especially dear to him.

The truth is, that all these criticisms of Mezzofanti, and the impressions as to the superficial character of his acquirements which they embody, have emanated for the most part from casual visitors, who saw him but for a brief space, and whose opportunity of testing his knowledge was probably limited to a few questions and answers, in a language not his own; the main object of the visit being, not to sound the depth or accuracy of his knowledge in itself, but

merely the fluency and correctness of his manner of speaking the language in which the visitor desired to try him. Whereas, on the contrary, those who bear witness to the solidity of his information and the vast range of his knowledge, are those who knew him long and intimately; who met him as a friend and companion, not as an object of curiosity, and of wonder; and whose estimate of him was founded upon the impressions of familiar and every-day intercourse—the only safe test of character or of acquirements.

There is more truth in the strictures upon Mezzofanti as a writer. In this respect, indeed, he is known very little; for his only published composition, the Panegyric of Father Aponte, and the fugitive poetical exercises in the appendix of this Memoir, can hardly be said to place him in the category of authors. Unhappily, indeed, the spirit of authorship is, with many, a question rather of temperament than of ability. In some it is the very breath of their life—an actual necessity of existence. To others it is a barren and ungrateful labour—undertaken with reluctance, and pursued without satisfaction. Southey used to say, that he never felt fully master of himself and of all his unclouded faculties, till he found himself seated at his desk. The current of his thoughts never flowed freely except through his pen. On the contrary, Magliabecchi—the living library—the *helluo librorum*—never could prevail on himself to publish a single line! Unfortunately for science, Mezzofanti was of the latter class. Partly from constitutional delicacy, and especially from weakness of the chest,

the effort of writing was to him irksome and even injurious. Partly too, no doubt, the same constitutional tendency of mind which rendered speaking easy and attractive, indisposed him for the more toilsome—to him positively distressing—mode of communicating his thoughts by writing. Except for the purposes of private study, therefore, he seldom wrote more than some fugitive piece; and, even when he was prevailed on to write at greater length, he was seldom sufficiently satisfied with his own performances to permit them to be made public. Several, even of these essays which were read by him in the learned societies of Bologna and Rome, are known to have been destroyed by himself before his death; including some which, from their title and subject, might naturally have been expected to afford some insight into the character of his mind, and his capacity for dealing with the philosophy of language.

Accordingly, the small figure which he made as a writer, and the little trace which he has left behind him of the vast stores of languages which he had laid up during life, have led to an undue depreciation of his career, as objectless and unprofitable, whether to himself or to his fellow-men. Whatever be the truth of this estimate, no one was more painfully sensible of it than the Cardinal himself. Many of his expressions of regret have been already recorded; but only those who knew him intimately, could know the depth and sincerity of his repinings. Still, although it is not possible to avoid sharing in this regret, he would be very exacting, indeed, and would set up for himself a very terrible standard whereby

to judge his own conduct, who could venture to pronounce such a career as Mezzofanti's empty or unprofitable. Even if we put aside entirely the consideration of his literary life, and test him by the rules of personal duty alone, the life of Cardinal Mezzofanti was a model of every virtue of the Christian and of the priest. Devout almost to scrupulousness, sincerely humble, simple in his habits, modest and unexacting in his own person, but spending himself unhesitatingly in the service of others; courteous, amiable, affectionate, warm in his friendships, he was known only to be loved, and he never forfeited a friendship which he once had formed. His benevolence was of the true Christian stamp—not a mere unreflecting impulse, but a sustained and systematic love of his fellow creatures. Although his charity was of the tenderest and most melting kind—although in truth, like Goldsmith's Vicar,

His pity gave, ere charity began—

although his alms, limited as were his means, were so prodigal as to earn for him the sobriquet of *Monsignor Limosiniere*, "*My Lord Almoner;*"—yet it would be a great mistake to measure his benevolence by the actual extent of poverty which it relieved, or of the assistance it administered. His active spirit grasped every detail of this work of God—the care of the sick, the instruction of the young, the edification and enlightment of the stranger;—nay, the very courtesies of social intercourse had for him all the sacred significance of a duty; and, while he never offended the sensibility of his companions by unseasonably obtru-

ding over-serious conversation, yet he never lost sight, even in his lightest hours, of the obligation of good example and edification which his position and character imposed uponhim.

And as regards the great pursuit of his literary life, which some have presumed to deny as "empty word-knowledge," and unprofitable display, it must never be forgotten—even though we should be content to judge its value by the selfish standard of mere utility—that, for himself, one of its earliest and most attractive, as well as most endearing sources of interest, lay in the opportunity which it afforded him for the exercise of his sacred ministry and the only less sacred offices of charity and humanity; that many of its most precious acquisitions were gathered in these very exercises of religion and of benevolence; that his usual text books in each new language were the catechism and the Bible; and that his favourite theatre for the display of his gifts were the sick wards of the hospitals of Bologna, the Santo Spirito or the House of Catechumens at Rome, and the halls and *camerate* of the great Missionary College of the Propaganda.

For myself, I cannot envy the moral and intellectual utilitarianism, which pauses to measure by so paltry a standard a great psychological phenomenon, such as Nature, in the most prodigal exercise of her powers, has never before given to man to see. As well might we shut our eyes to the glory of those splendid meteors which at intervals illumine the sky, because we are unable to see what cold and sordid purpose of human utility they may be made to subserve.

I prefer to look to him with grateful and affectionate admiration, as a great example of the successful cultivation of one of the noblest of God's gifts to His creatures;—as the man who has approached nearest to the withdrawal of that barrier to intercommunion of speech which, in punishment of human pride, was set up at Babel; and of whom, more literally than of any other son of Adam, it may be said, that he could

> Hold converse with all forms
> Of the many-sided mind.

APPENDIX.

[Allusion is made, more than once, in this volume, to Cardinal Mezzofanti's habit of amusing himself and his friends by writing short metrical pieces in various languages, and of composing or correcting the odes recited by the pupils at the annual Polyglot Academy of the Propaganda. In the absence of other data for judging of his skill as a linguist, these fragments, trifling though they be, are of considerable interest; and I had hopes of being able to form a little collection of them, as a contribution to the enquiry regarding him. Unfortunately my search for these remains, trivial and fugitive as most of them must have been, has been very unsuccessful. I am only able to add a few to those which appear in the sheet of fac-similes, or which have been already incidentally introduced in the course of the narrative.

The short pieces recited at the Propaganda Academy, being the property of the pupils themselves, are not preserved in the college archives. I have only succeeded in obtaining four of these pieces:—two from Rome, a Greek Anacreontic Ode, and a couple of stanzas in the Grisons dialect; and two in Angolese from the Rev. Charles Fernando, Missionary Apostolic in Ceylon.

The Abbate Mazza, Vice-Rector of the Pontifical Seminary at Bologna, has kindly sent me a Hebrew Psalm addressed by Mezzofanti, as a tribute on his Jubilee (or the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination as a priest), to his old friend and master, Father Emmanuel Aponte; and a Latin Hexameter Poem, descriptive of St. Peter's Church at Rome, recited by him in the *Accademia degli Arcadi*, on his being elected a member of that body.

These little pieces, it need hardly be said, are offered merely as specimens of Mezzofanti's power as a linguist, and not as possessing any striking excellence, whether of poetry or sentiment. It is only just to his memory to add that, judging from his well-known habit of composition, they may all be presumed to be literally *impromptu*, and are entitled to the full indulgence usually accorded to such productions.]

I. *Hebrew Psalm,* addressed to Father Emmanuel Aponte—on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination.*

לקיוף מחזופאנתי

א. שמך עמנואל שם טוב כשמן תורף על כן רצו נעריס
ואהיבוך וזקניס גם המה בקשו חכמה שפתיך

ב. מה נאוו על ציים רגליך מבשר משמיע משמיע שלוס מבשר
טוב משמיע ישועה

ג. אור גנח בארצסו בעת באך ממזרת מאז הגדלת השמחה
והרבית דעת ומוסר נתת לרל דורשי בינה ואור פני
אדני בכל מעשיך ראו עיניני

ד. חנה היום החלפת כנשר לבוא משכנות אדני ואחרי חמישים
שנת תוצא עוד לחם ויין כהן לאל עליון כהן עולם על
דברתי מלכיצדך

ה. לכו ננגו לארנדי תשועה לעור ישענו כי חתלה זקן טוב חסיד
לו לגשת אליו לכהן להתפלל לפניו ולכתר עוניו

ו. גתת ארני לעמנואל חן וכבוד כי הלך בתמים למד חוכמה
ועשה ערק

ז. ויראה לנך אזנך אלהים מלך הכבור ענה עבדיך תלמידי
זקן טוב חן לו ארך ומים ורצון וברכה תעטרהו

Latin Translation.

Josephus Mezzofanti.

1. Nomen tuum, Emanuel, nomen bonum, sicut oleum effusum, propterea excurrerunt adolescentes, et dilexerunt te. Et senes ipsi quoque quæsierunt sapientiam labiorum tuorum,

2. Quam speciosi fuerunt in insulis pedes tui, evangelizans predicator! prædicans pacem, evangelizans bonum, prædicans salutem!

3. Luxfulsit in terra nostra, quando venisti ab oriente: ex eo tempore magnificasti lætitiam et multiplicasti scientiam, et eruditionem dedisti omnibus quærentibus intelligentiam; et lumen vultus Domini in omnibus operibus tuis viderunt oculi nostri.

4. Ecce hodie innovas te sicut aquila, ut intres in habitacula Domini: et post quinquaginta annos profers adhuc panem et vinum, sacerdos Dei Altissimi, sacerdos in eternum secundum ordinem Melchisedec.

5. Venite exultemus Domino, jubilemus petræ salutis nostræ; quia segregavit senem bonum sanctum sibi, ut accederet ad eum, ut fungeretur sacerdotio, ut ovaret ante faciem ejus, ut propitiaret super nos.

* There is little originality in this piece, the words and forms being closely scriptural. It is without points, but he occasionally, also, employed them in writing Hebrew.

6. Dedisti Domine Emanueli gratiam et gloriam, quia ambulavit in integritate, docuit sapientiam, et operatus est justitiam.

7. Nunc ergo inclina aurem tuam, Deus Rex Gloriæ! Exaudi servos tuos, discipulos senis boni! Da illi longitudinem dierum et beneplacito ac benedictione corona bis illum!

II. *Greek Anacreontic Ode "On the Adoration of the Shepherds," composed for the Propaganda Academy.*

Ὁ καιρὸς ἦλθεν ἤδη
Ὃν εἶσαν οἱ προφῆται
Υἱος δ' ὁ Ἰε Θεόϊο
Ἐξ ὑρανῶν καϊήλθεν,
Ἵνα βροῖες σαῶσῃ.
Αὔλὸς δ' Ἀναξ ἀνάκλων,
Ἐκ Παρθένε γενηλὸς,
Θρόνον Θεῳ πρέπουλα
Οὐκ εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ φάϊνον.
Ὁ δ' Ἄγγελος παρασλάς
Τοῖς ποιμέσιν, διδάσκει
Ὡς κοσμε ἦλθ' ὁ Σωϊήρ.
Οἱ δ' εὐθεώς λαβόυλες
Δῶρα βρέφει φέρεσι,
Χάριν δ' ἀπ' αὐϊε εὗρον.
Πένης δ' ὁλως ἅμ' ἄυτοῖς
Ἀμνὸν Ἰὸν εἶχε μἔνον
Ἤνεγκε Ἰῳ Νεογνῷ.
Ὁ Παῖς ὁρᾷ Ἰὸν ἀμνόν,
Καὶ προσγελᾷ διδόϋλι.
Τὶ Ἰόϊ'; Ἔγνω γἄρ αὐϊε
Τὔπὸν—Θεἔ περ αὔϊός
Ὁ πρᾶος ἐσ'ϊίν ἀμνός
Ἀμαρϊίας ἀφαιρῶν
Τὲ κόσμε—Ἀμνὲ, χαῖρε!
Ἄρον δ' ἁμαρϊίας μου!
Ἄρον—χάριν Ἰε δός μοι!

III. *Latin Hexameter Poem, recited in the Arcadian Academy at Rome.*

J. M.

PASTOR ARCAS.

Romuleas Arces, fulgentia Templa Tonantis
Quae fuerant dudum, conscendo munere vestro,
Arcades; et celsas sedes teneo, Arcas et ipse,
Et parvi custos nemoris. Sed non ego doctus,

Aut calamos inflare leves, aut dicere versus;
At geminare sonos gaudens, et reddere voces,
Quas longinqua edit gens, aut contermina nostrae.

Hic adsum, florens postquam est exacta juventa,
Temporaque adventans mihi tardior inficit aetas,
Adsumus hic, patriosque lares, et linquimus arva,
Pinguia quae Rheni preterfluit unda minoris:
Linquimus et colles, varium queis Daedala tellus
Submittit florem et vites—tua munera, Bacche!
Linquimus et turres, quarum altera celsa minatur
In cœlum, impendit præfracto vertice flexa
Altera, nutanti similis jam jamque ruenti.
Adsumus hic tandem, Eumetes* cum tempora vittâ
Tergeminâ redimit, cœlique oracula promit.
Scilicet hic nobis suprema e sede benignus,
Annuit. Æternam tum nos advenimus Urbem.

Hic vestra assidue lustrans decora alta, Quirites,
Quaeque recens tulit, et quæ prisci temporis aetas.
Vocibus hæc refero, "Vos terque, quaterque beati,
Non peritura quibus vulgata est fama per orbem!"
Eximia at quoties cerno heic monumenta virorum,
Felsina quos aluit, quosve extulit infula Petri,
Quive aedes vestras decorant et Templa, Quirites,
Tunc animus nobis patriæ exardescit amore!
Dulcia tunc nostrum pertentant gaudia pectus!

Tum Templum ingressus, quo nil præstantius aevis,
Praeteritis vidit Sol, aspicietque futuris,
Admiror molem ingentem, artificumque labores,
En mihi spectanti fulget morientis imago,
Mira senis,† sapiens qui dia volumina pandit!
Aspice, ut in genua is procumbens corpore totó,
Brachia demittit, languentia lumina torquet,
Et capit extrema, eternae sed pabula vitæ,
Illic cerne modo, ut malo suspenditur alto,
Saevi qui morbi contagia depulit Urbe!
Hinc miles validis incurvat viribus arcum,
Atque hinc acer equus permissis fertur habenis:—
Diffugiunt matres, puerique, ignobile vulgus;—
Ast Heros ad cœlum ardentia lumina tendit,
Dicenti similis:—"Nostrum accipe, Christe, cruorem!"
Protinus en Michael exerto devolat ense,‡

* Eumetes was the name under which, by ancient usage of the *Arcadi*, Gregory XVI., before his elevation, had been enrolled in their Academy.
† Domenichino's Communion of St. Jerome.
‡ Communion of St. Sebastian, also by Domenichino.

Ac monstrum horrendum sub tristia Tartara mittit,
Parte alia occubuit cœlesti percita amore,
Et volat ad superos virgo de germine Petri!*

Hæc præclara artis miracula, Felsina prodis,
In tua cum varios inducis vela colores!
Sed quinam effulgent niveo de marmore vultus!
En opus, en!—Algarde, tuum, et spirantia signa!†
Attila hic, ille Leo: demissi nubibus instant
Et Petrus et Paulus, magnæ tutamina Romæ!
Attila terrarum metus, et squalentibus armis,
Horridus, ense ferox Martis, (sic namque putaret,
Ensem quem Pastor vitulæ vestigia læsæ,
Atra cruore sequens Scythiis invenerat agris,)
Elatosque gerens animos cœlique flage lum,
Sese compellans, sibi totum adsciverat Orbem.
Ergo suis atrox erumpit sedibus, atque
Bella ciet populis late, crudelia bella;
Omnia namque furens ferro populatur et igne;
Efferus incedit per membra fluentia tabo;
Respicit, et gaudet loca jam convulsa ruinis.
Immites primum Dacas juga ferre coegit;
Tum quoque Bistonios, dein Odrysiosque feroces;
Illyriumque; tuas exin, Germania, terras!
Illum nec Rhenus nec Gallia terret ovantem;
Pulsus, proh, remeat, pelagi ceu refluit unda!
Ocius ille domum rediit: pudor incitat iras;
Agmina dira legit, bellumque ferocius urget,
Ac nova Romanæ meditatur praelia genti.
Qualis percussus saevo leo vulnere, pugnam
Integrat, et late silvas rugitibus implet;
Talem Hunnorum Rex gestans in corde furorem,
Italiae ingreditur campos et milite complet.
Omnis humo fumat jam Aquileja; Mediolanum,
Et Verona ruunt; Ticinum et Parma fatiscunt:
Attila per medias cædes bacchatur et ignes:
Sed nihil ille actum reputat, dum Roma superstes.
Ire parat Romam: convellit signa, movetque
Agmina; cen apium ducunt examina reges!
Tunc illum miles dictis affatur amicis.
"Quo tibi nunc iter? Heu! acies Alaricus in Urbem,
Induxit;—mox ingreditur dum mœnia Rhegi,
Connubiumque parat, fato decedit acerbo!"

* Guercino's St. Petronilla.
† Algardi's bas-relief group of Attila and St. Leo.

Hæc audit, dubiusque hæret. Mox æstuat ira
Dux, movet et castra. Est eadem sententia menti,
Cum subito miserisque dolens, et cœlitus actus,
Magnus adest Leo, sacra vitta et veste decorus.
Constitit ille tremens, stupet, et vox faucibus hæret!
Verba deinde audit dulci stillantia melle;
Mitescunt animi dictis, et corda residunt.
"Attila quo cessere minæ, quo spiritus acer?"
Hæc miles. Contra Hunnorum Rex talia fatur:
"Nonne duos aetate graves atque ore severo,
Delapsos caelo spectas mortemque minantes,
Districtis gladiis? Feror hinc!—Jam tollite signa,
Et patrios fines, montes silvasque petamus:—
Mens haud illa mihi bello contendere Divis!"
Hæc ait, et nostris excedit finibus Hunnus.
Ast nullæ servant latebræ, nullique recessus,
Persequitur quos ira Dei. Namque Attila, solvit
Dum metibus sese, parat et dulces hymenæos,
Occubuit proprio suffusus nocte cruore!
Est Deus in cœlis fandi memor atque nefandi!
At Leo contendit Romam, jussitque lubentes,
Et Petro et Paulo persolvere vota Quirites;
Et Petrus et Paulus resonant per templa, per aedes!

Felix Roma! Tibi hæc data sunt munimina cœlo!
Et dedit Eumetem mitis Deus atque benignus!
Imperat Eumetes, et pax dominabitur Orbi!
Arcades, o Petrum et Paulum celebrate canentes;
Et vestros repetent septem cacumina versus!

Vos Petri Paulique fidem servate, Quirites!
Eternum servate fidem, servabitis Urbem!

IV. *Epiphany Ode in the Angolese language, written for the Academy of* 1845.*

He Zambi! Mubundulula,
Mubundulula coettu.
Mu Quixixi Quitombi,
Quitombi, O—vundu,
O Riala muca cuffua mucutu,
Muca! I'nhia!
Tctembuca!
Kieno ki Miscino,
Skitatu miscino,
A—ssueta a Belem,

* As I have no knowledge of this or the Grisons language, I fear the orthography will be found inaccurate.

A-beza camona,
Camona cafeli.
Nhi-bula-canu,
Una camona Zambi,
Zambi ni Riala ni,
Mubundulula via Quinixi,
Ocutanhinha u-a-gile,
Hi Riala! batessa ocutanhinha,
Beza a-camona,
A-camona cafeli,
Eyè muca muno,

V. *Angolese Ode for the Academy of* 1846.

Tctembuca, Tctembuca!
I'nhai? Kieno ki,
Amona—Miscino,
Kitatu Misciso,
A-bocala monsu,
Monsu via Kian cu,
Kieno-ki! una-a-beza,
A-beza camona,
Camona cafeli.
Ah! nghi-bala cana,
Tina camona Zambi,
Monandanghi Zambi,
Mubundulula, Mobundulala, coettu!

VI. *Epiphany Ode in the Grisons, or Graubünden, Dialect.*

Steila che partas legerment,
E trej reigs clomag d'alg orient,
Ti clara steila ventireila,
Meinag a Dieu l'olma fideiola!

O Telg da Dieu! o mig salvader!
D'ilg pievelg tuttig ti ey sprindrader!
Gloria al Bab che Ti ha envian!
Piugch alg Christgang che Ti has trostigian!

VII. [The following epigram was addressed to Cardinal Lambruschini on the appearance of his Essay on the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. It is hardly worthy of the subject.]

Tota es pulcra, DEI Genitrix, ab origine pulcra es!
Hoc decuit, potuit, fecit et Omnipotens.
Asserit invictus decus hoc Tibi fulgidus ostro
Auctor. Scriptorem protege, Virgo, tuum.

The Italian version which accompanied it is much more happy.

Tu sa se'bella, o di DIO Madre;
Sin da principio bella tu sé.
Così ad Eva dicevasi, e il Sommo Padre
Tutto pondo, così pur fé.

Or Ti mantiene un tanto onore,
Chi d' ostro fulgido tra lo splendor,
A' penna invitta di grande Autore:
Proteggi, o Vergine, il tuo Scrittor!

VIII. *French Stanza given to children after their First Communion.*

Demandez au bon Dieu le don de la sagesse;
C'est le veritable tresor!—demandez-le sans cesse!
Mais it faut le chercher avec simplicité
Pour guide, mes enfans, prenant la Pieté,

IX. *Italian Stanza.*

Di mille voci e mille quanto al cuore
Più soave e gradita è la parola,
Che un afflitto consola,
E l'anima solleva al Creatore!

X. *English verses given to an Irish student on his leaving the Propaganda.*

"May Christ be on your lips and heart!
Show forth by facts what words impart;
That, by sound words and good behaviour,
You may lead others to the Saviour."

XI. *Written for a student.*

O man, what is thy science?—Vanity:
And thou art nothing without charity.

END.